



Is the Kenyan Democracy Working? Views from AB Survey

Gedion Onyango

AFROBAROMETER SURVEYS
IDS UoN Seminar
Thursday, March 16, 2023 (2:00 – 4:00 pm EAT)

Introduction



- Has the support for democracy changed in the last decade?

THE STAR INDEPENDENT FRESH AND DIFFERENT
3 MARCH 2022 THURSDAY
KSh60 (TSh1,000 | US\$2,000)

UN environment programme 50 1972-2022
UNEP@50 COMMEMORATION
Theme: Strengthening UNEP for the implementation of the environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
DATE: 3rd to 4th, March 2022 VENUE: UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya

DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE DEPUTY PRESIDENT CLAIMS ECONOMY CAPTURED BY POWER CARTELS

Democracy in Kenya is on trial, Ruto tells US

He spoke of grand scheme to force Kenyans into a predetermined presidential election PG 4-5

OUTSIDE SUPPORT: Rachel Ruto, DP William Ruto and Musalia Mudavadi at the Kanson Institute for Race, Peace and Social Justice, Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, yesterday / [#REBECCA MUKURU/OPPS](#)

VOICES
WYCLIFFE MUGA
Delusions of exceptionalism
PAGE 10

MANIFESTO
Jobs and ease of business top private sector talks with Raila
Job creation, ease of doing business and uptake of more local content topped the agenda of the private sector's meeting with presidential aspirant Raila Odinga. Kenya Private Sector Alliance said players in the different sub-sectors of the economy are keen on a conducive environment to do business under the next regime.
PAGE 8

OFF THE HOOK
Mwingi hospital accused of botched surgery cleared
The Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council has let a hospital in Mwingi, Kitui county, off the hook over allegations it left a woman barren after a botched surgery. Bernadeta Mahua, then 33, was six months pregnant when she sought treatment at the private hospital after she suddenly started bleeding in July 2019.
PAGE 3

Should the military intervene to make democracy work?



**NAIROBI
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SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES

Do Kenyans prefer a government that gets things done or one they can hold accountable?



How is Kenyans' trust in government institutions vs informal institutions?



Is the rule of law under threat?

AFR
BAROMETER 1999-2019
20 years of giving voice to Africa



Data from outside AB

• Kenya's Democratic standing Globally and Regionally

Column1	Column2	Column3	Column4	Column5	Column6
State		Global position		Democracy Type	
Mauritius			21	Full	
Botswana			32	Flawed	
South Africa			45	Flawed	
Namibia			58	Flawed	
Ghana			63	Flawed	
Lesotho			71	Flawed	
Malawi			76	Hybrid	
Zambia			78	Hybrid	
Senegal			79	Hybrid	
Madagascar			80	Hybrid	
Tunisia			85	Hybrid	
Liberia			86	Hybrid	
Tanzania			92	Hybrid	
Kenya			94	Hybrid	
Morocco			95	Hybrid	
Sierra Leone			96	Hybrid	
Uganda			99	Hybrid	
Benin			104	Hybrid	
Nigeria			105	Hybrid	
Ivory Coast			106	Hybrid	
Mauritania			108	Hybrid	



FINDINGS

- ❑ Kenyans (78%) prefer democratic government. However, most (52%) are still dissatisfied with it
- ❑ As 58% of Kenyans think their democracy is a full democracy, 39% say it has major problems
- ❑ Almost half (47%) of Kenyans entertain military intervention in the political process, against (51%) who think KDF should not intervene.
- ❑ Majority (76%) prefer an accountable government to a government that only gets things done. Informal institutions also continue to enjoy substantial public confidence
- ❑ Most Kenyans (62%) think unequal treatment under the law has increased over the years

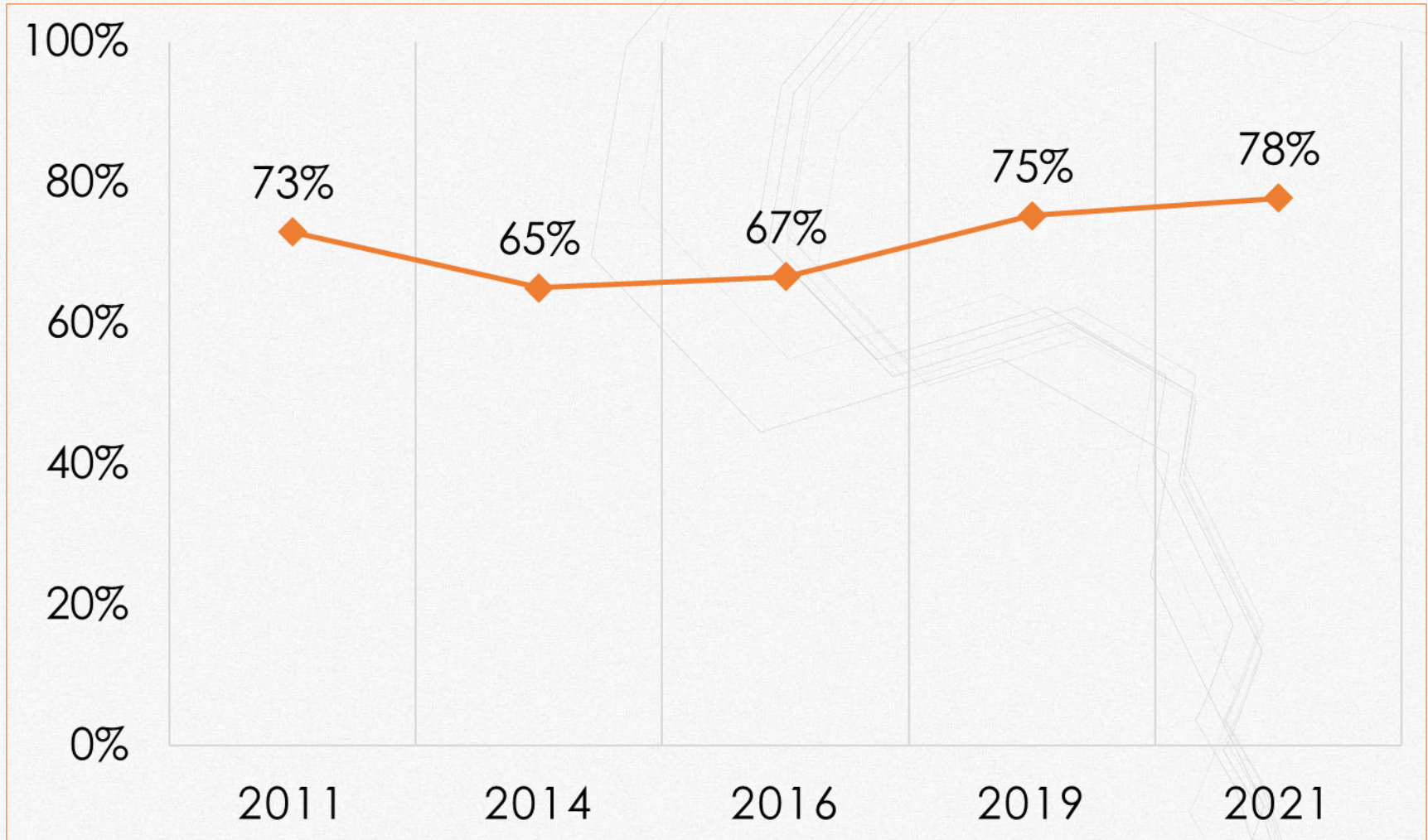




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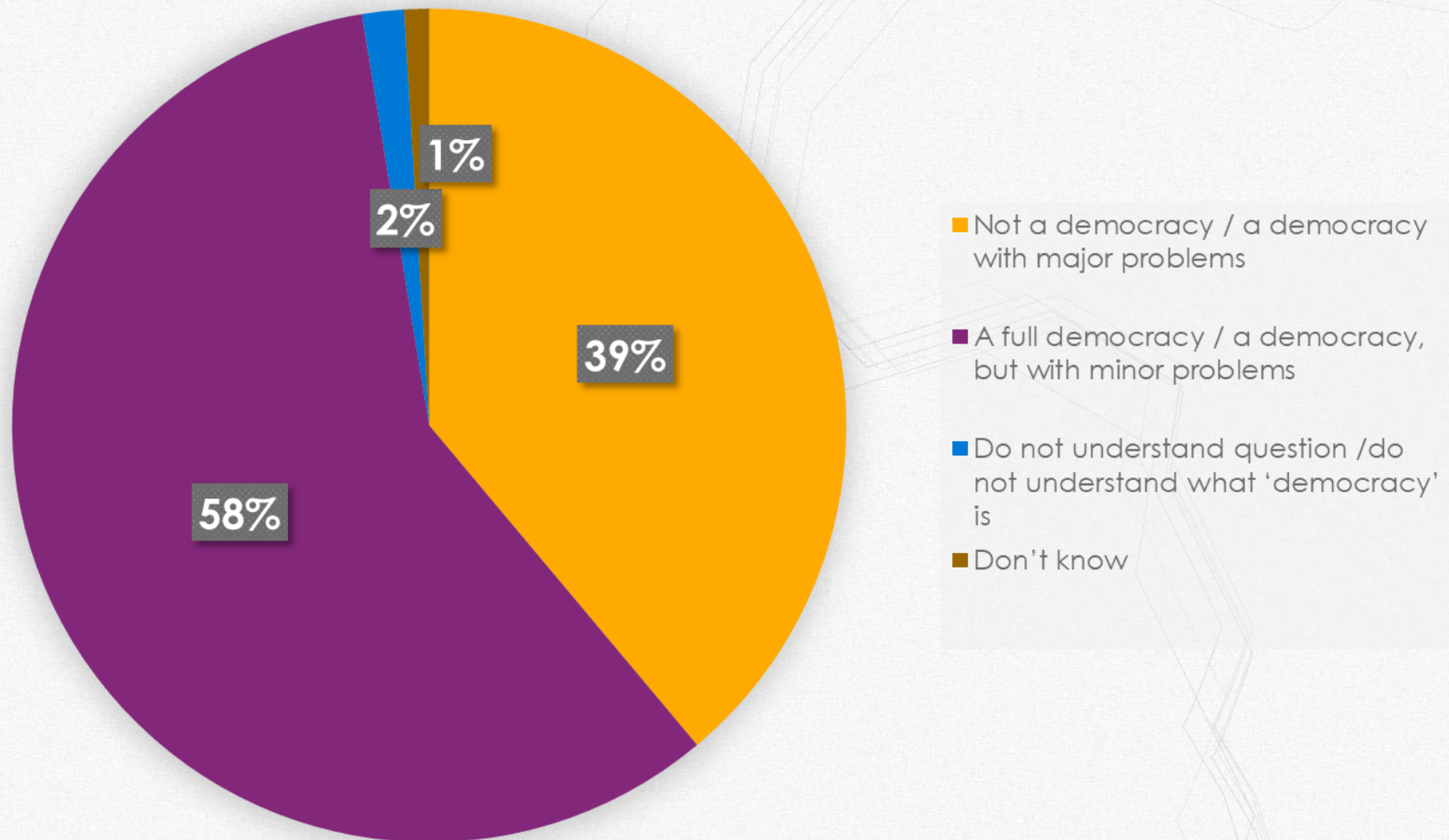
The support for democracy in the last decade

Support for democracy | 2011 - 2021



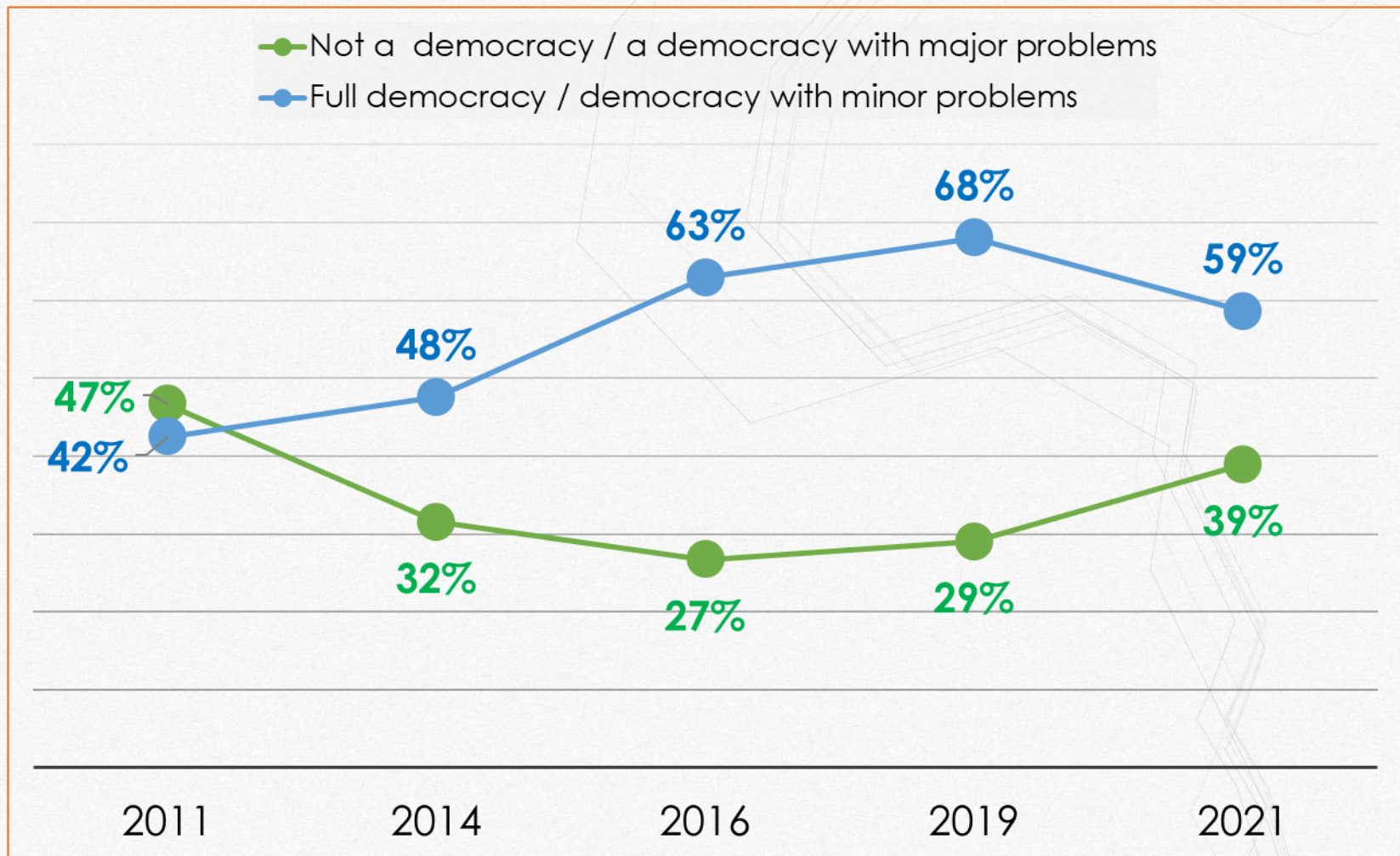
Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? (% saying 'democracy is preferable')

Extent of democracy | 2021



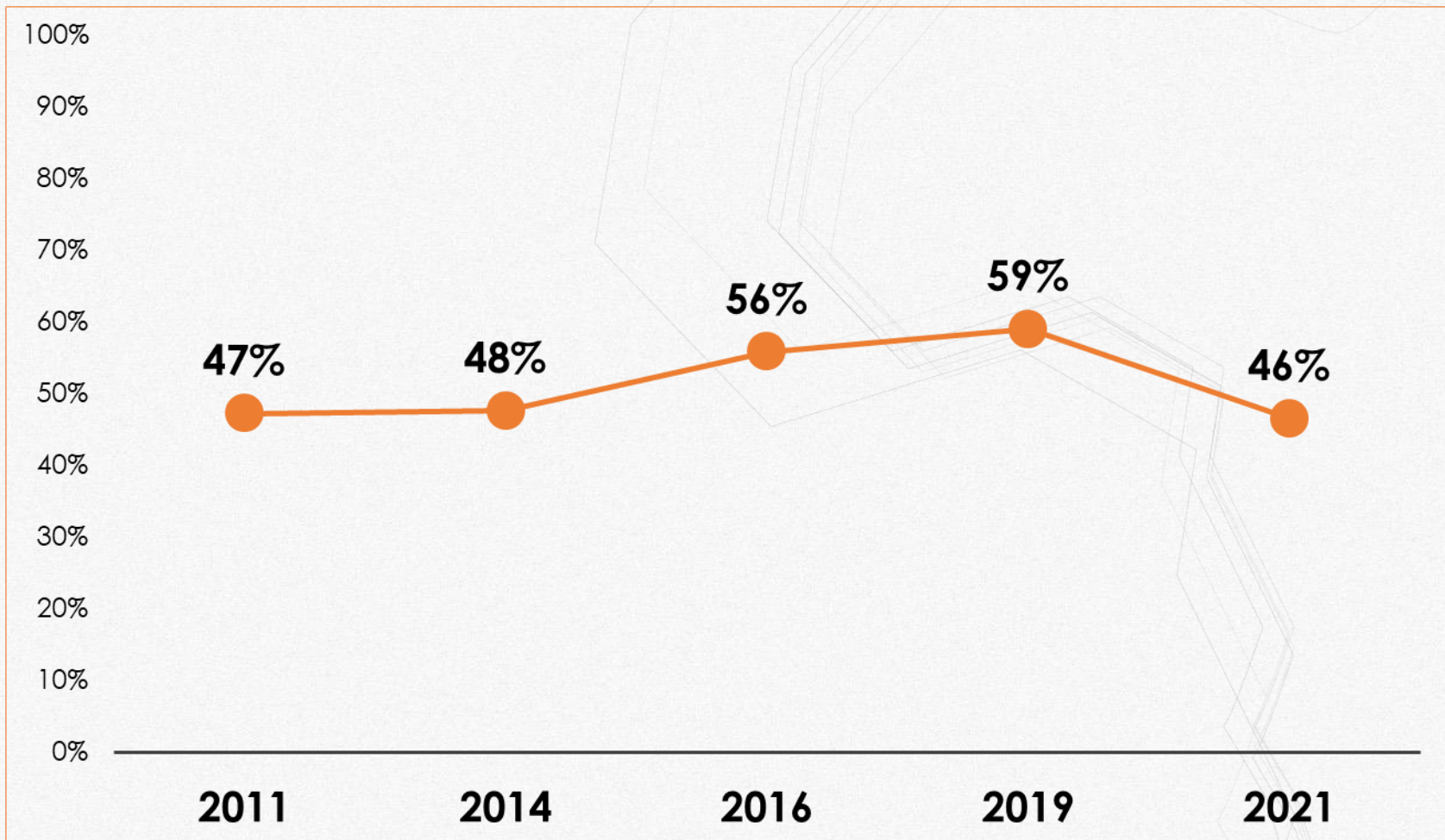
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Kenya today?

Extent of democracy | 2011 - 2021



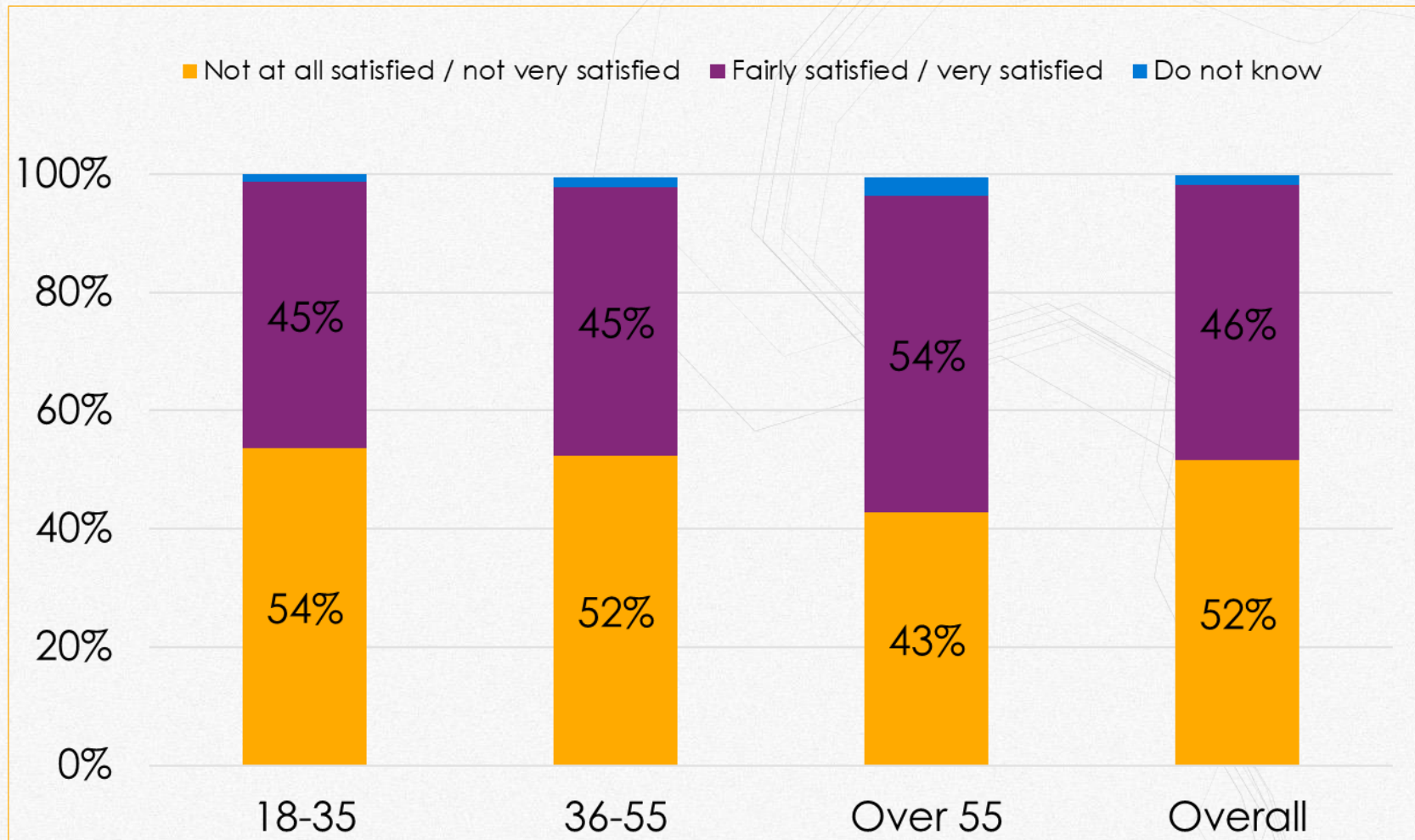
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Kenya today?

Satisfaction with democracy | 2011 - 2021



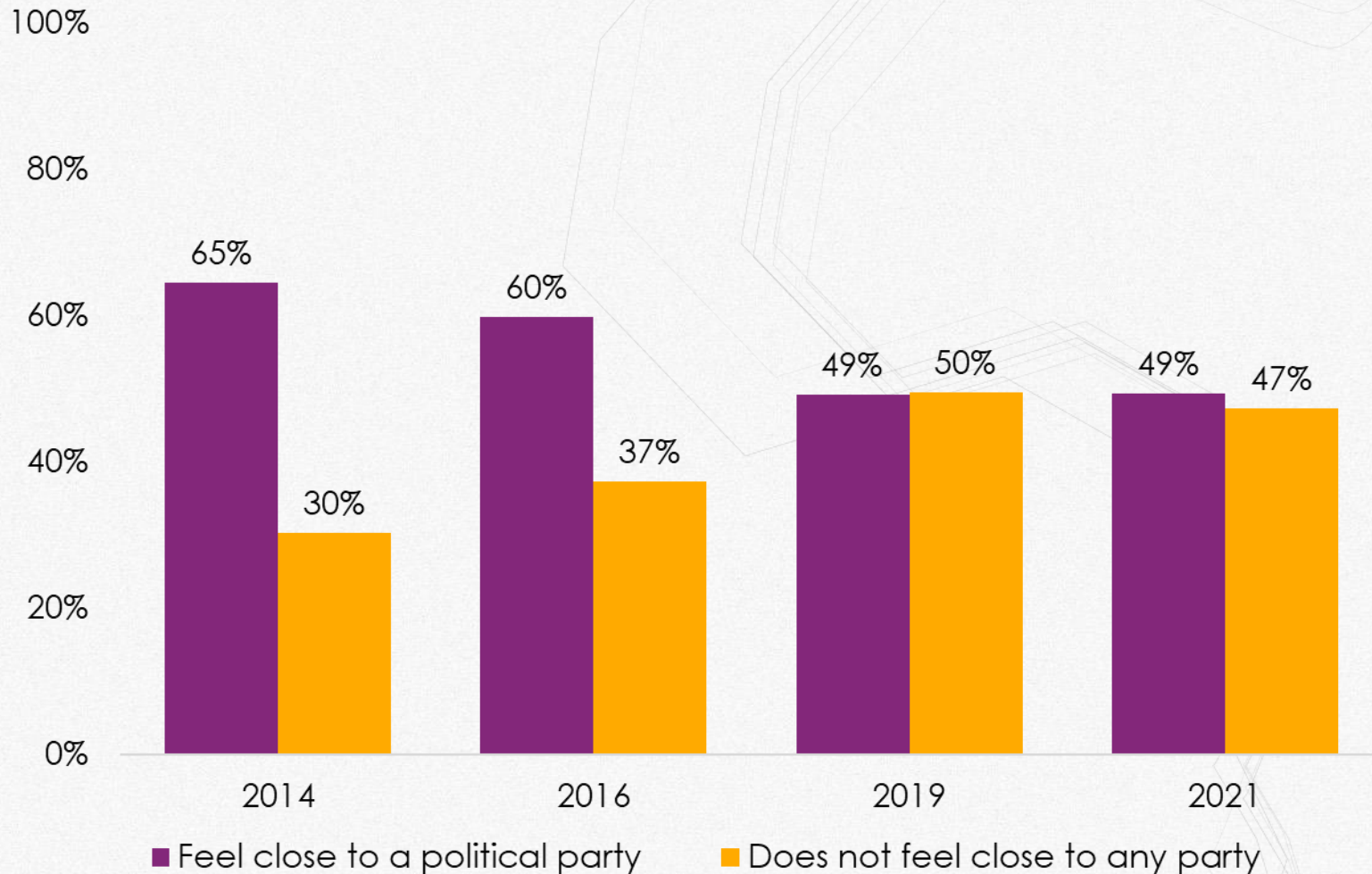
Respondents were asked: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Kenya? (% saying 'fairly satisfied' or 'very satisfied')

Satisfaction with democracy | 2021



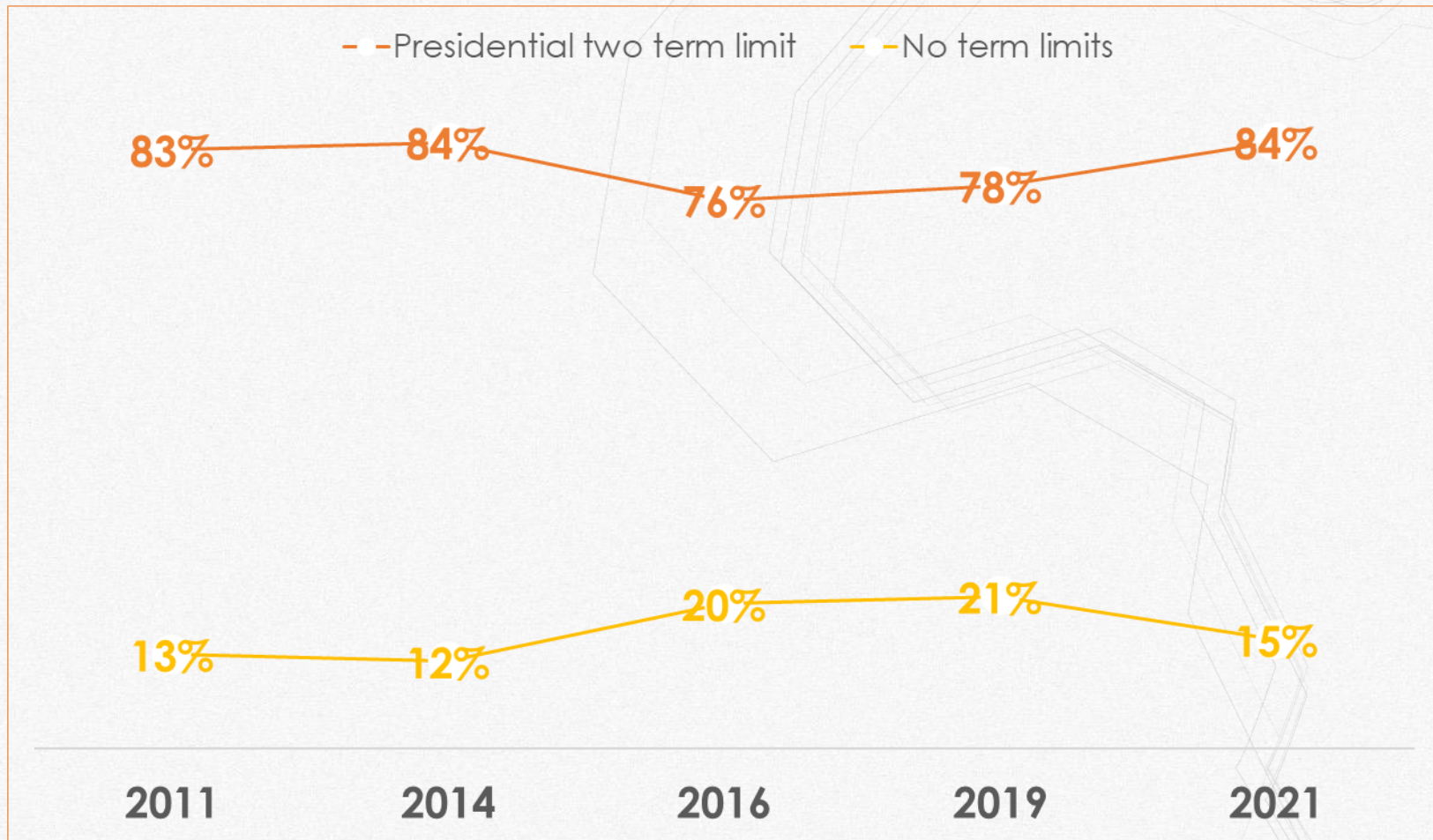
Respondents were asked: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Kenya?

Trend in political party identification | Kenya | 2014-2021



Respondents were asked: Do you feel close to any particular political party?

Presidential two term limit vs No term limits | 2011 - 2021

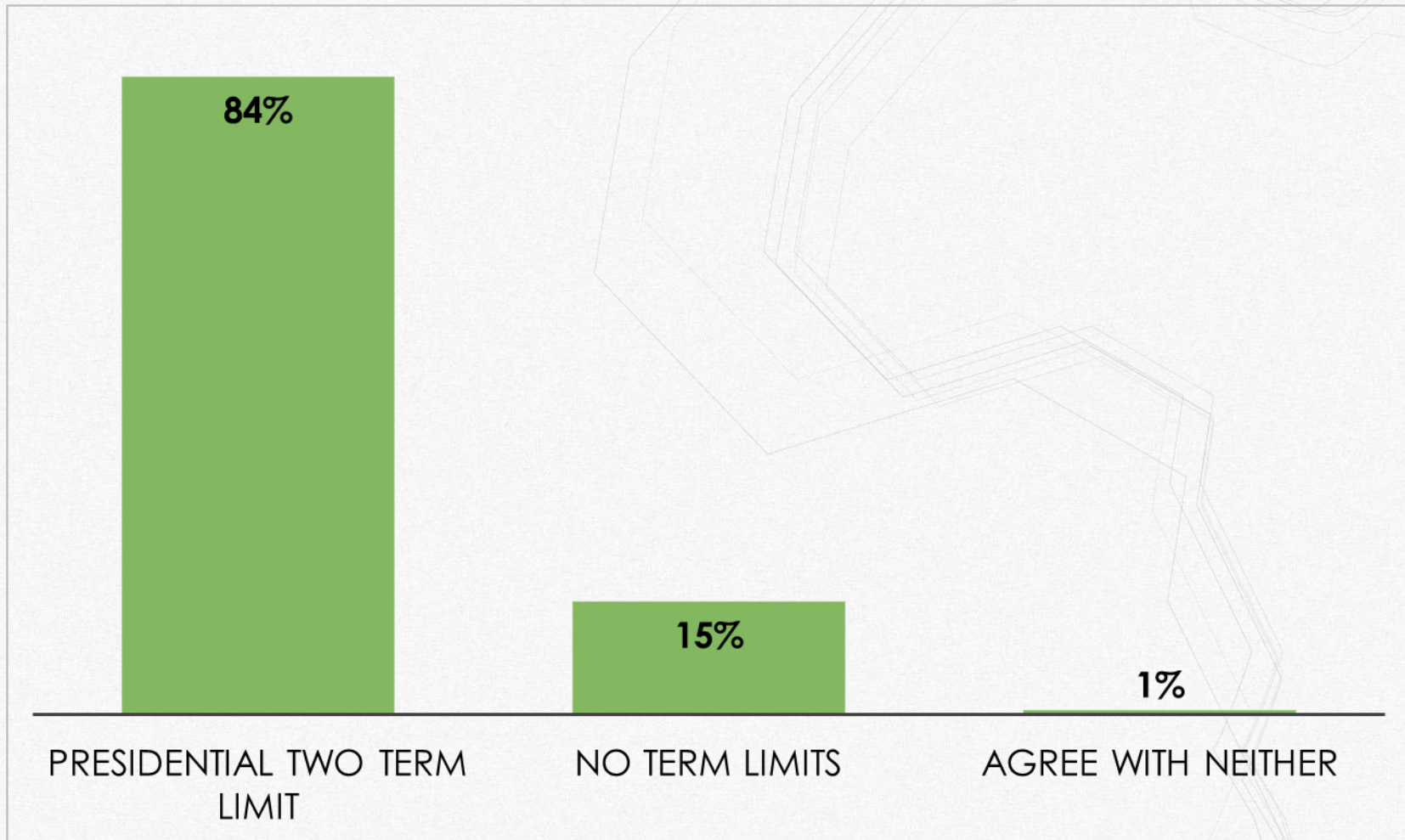


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: The Constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office.

Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve.

Presidential two term limit vs No term limits | 2021

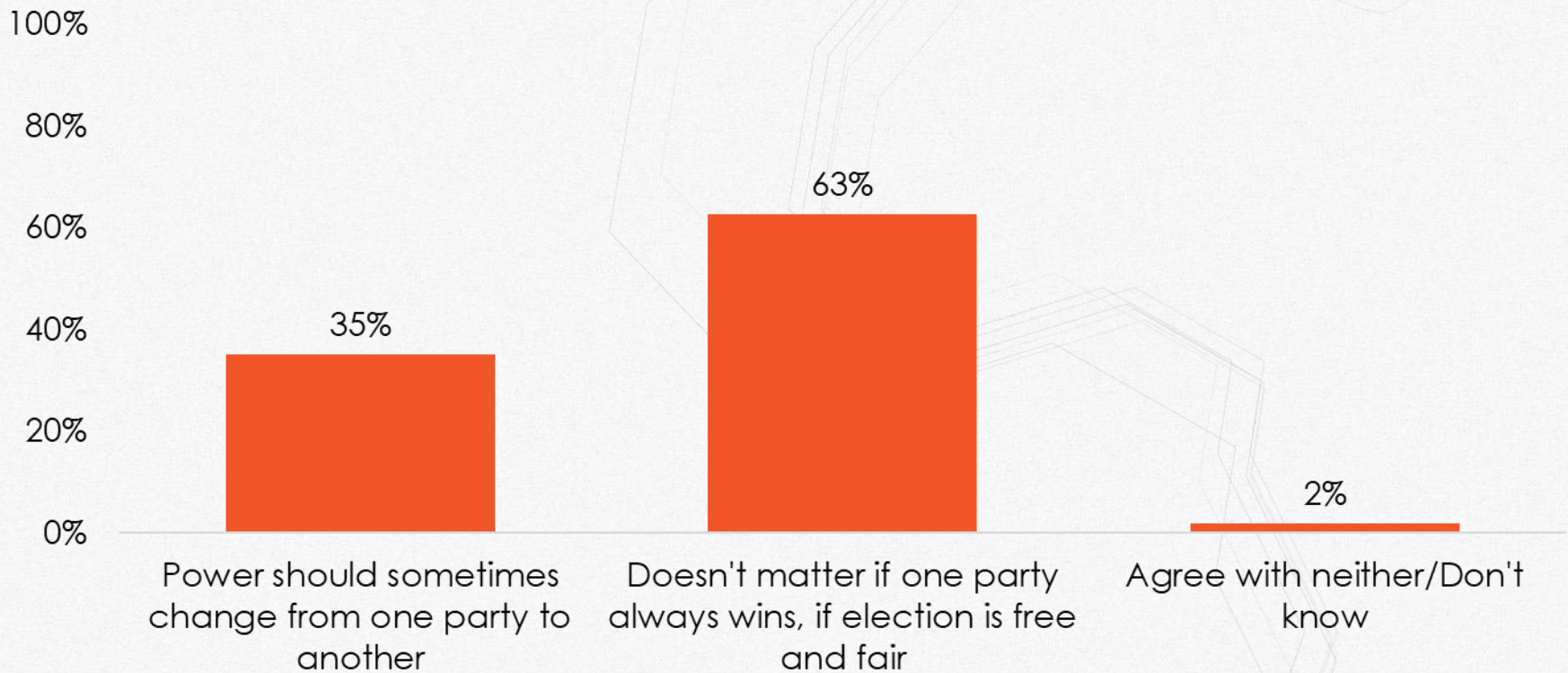


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Power changing hands between parties vs. continuous rule by one party | Kenya | 2021



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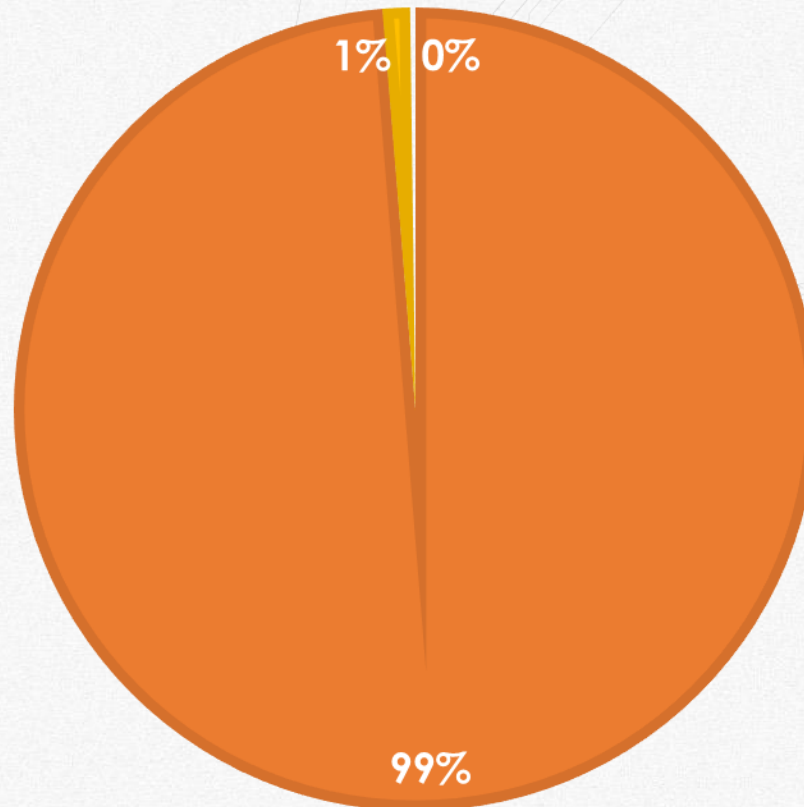
Statement 1: In a democracy, it is better if power sometimes changes hands in elections from one political party to another.

Statement 2: In a democracy, as long as a government is elected by the people in a free and fair election, it doesn't matter if one party always wins and continuously governs the country.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Opposition parties monitor government vs cooperate | 2021

■ Opposition parties examine government ■ Agree with neither ■ Don't know

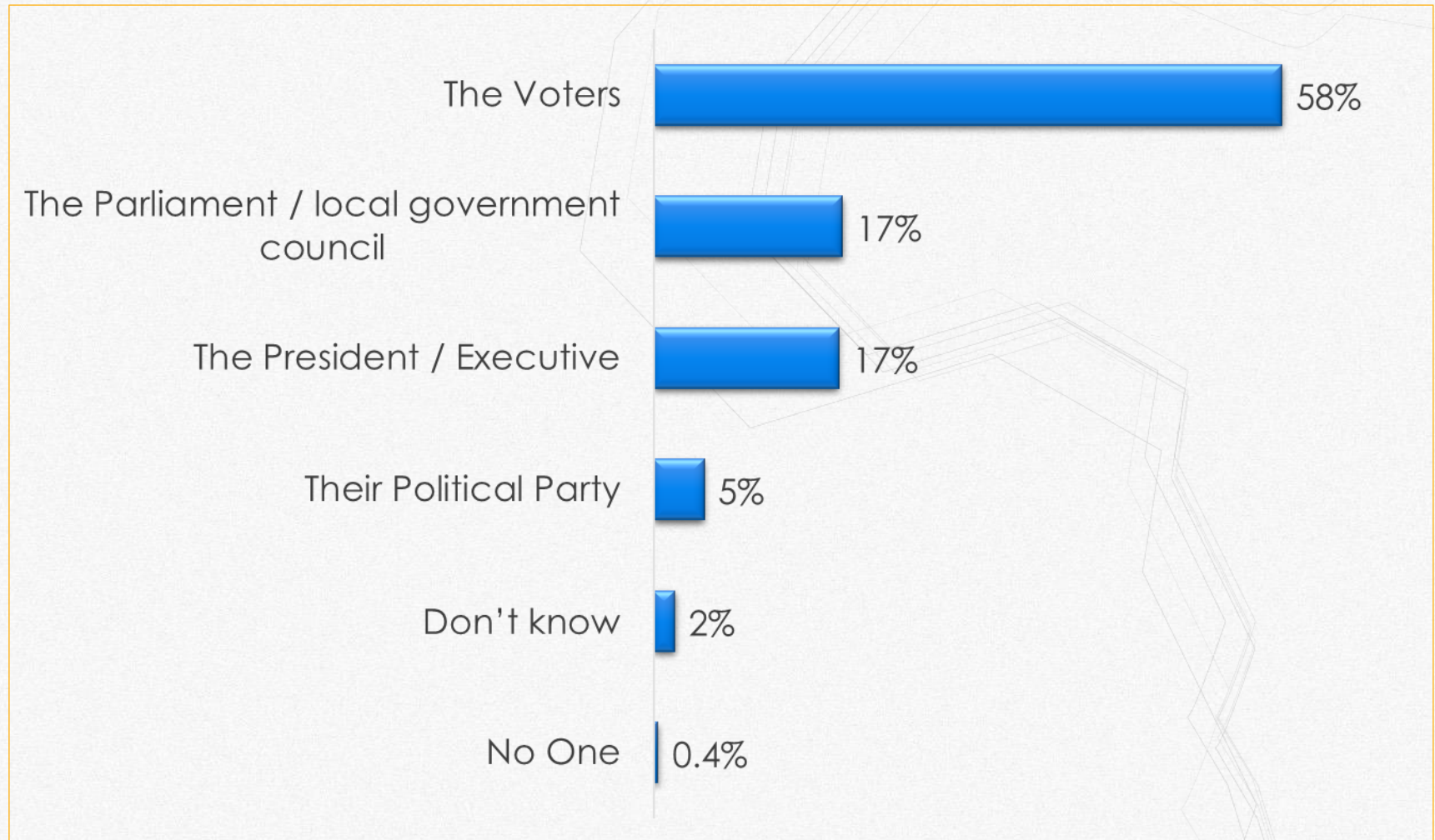


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: After losing an election, opposition parties should monitor and criticize the government in order to hold it accountable.

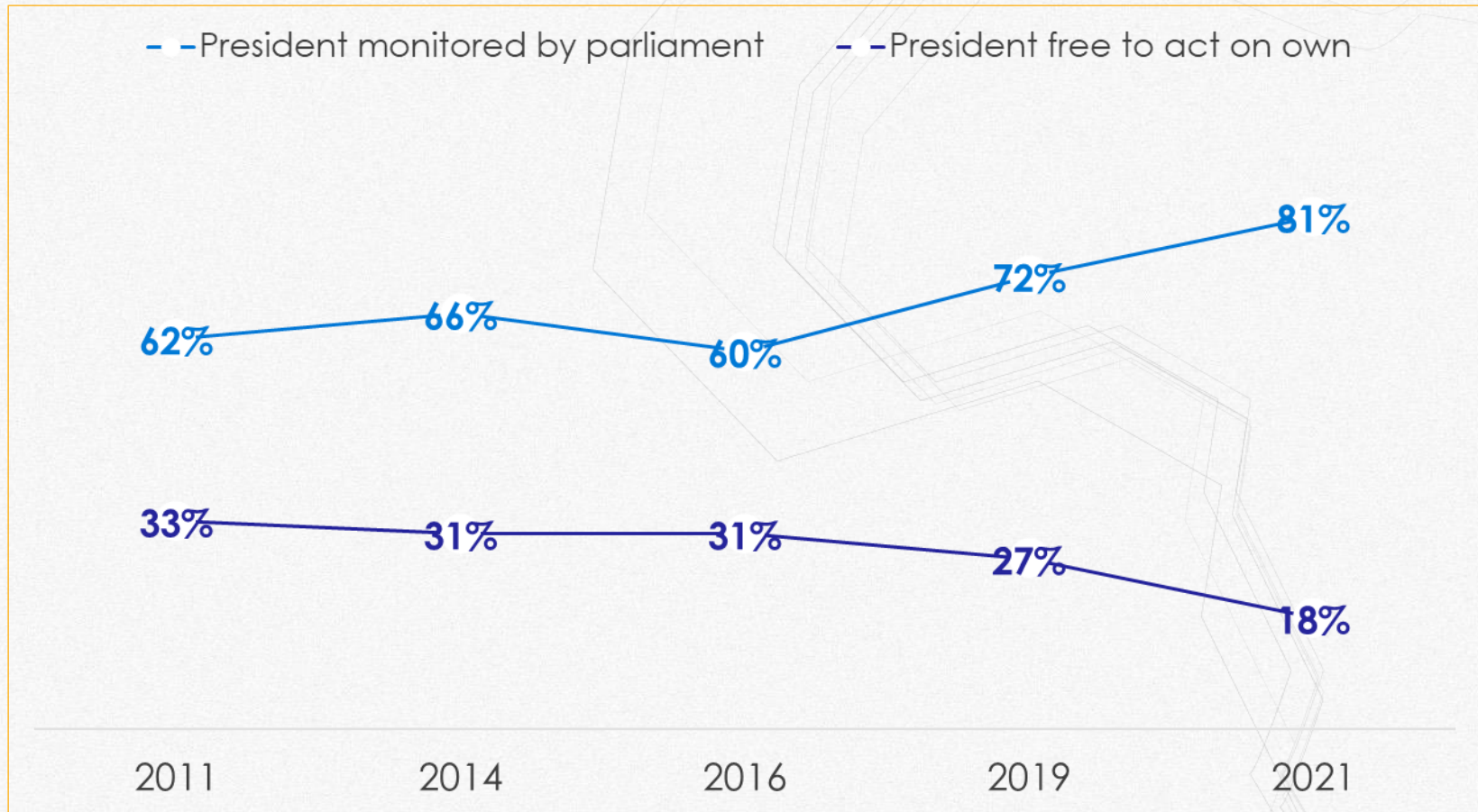
Statement 2: Once an election is over, opposition parties and politicians should accept defeat and cooperate with government to help it develop the country.

Who is responsible for MPs to do their jobs | 2021



Respondents were asked: Who should be responsible for: Making sure that, once elected, members of Parliament do their jobs?

President monitored by parliament vs President free to act on own | 2011 - 2021



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Parliament should ensure that the president explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends taxpayers' money.

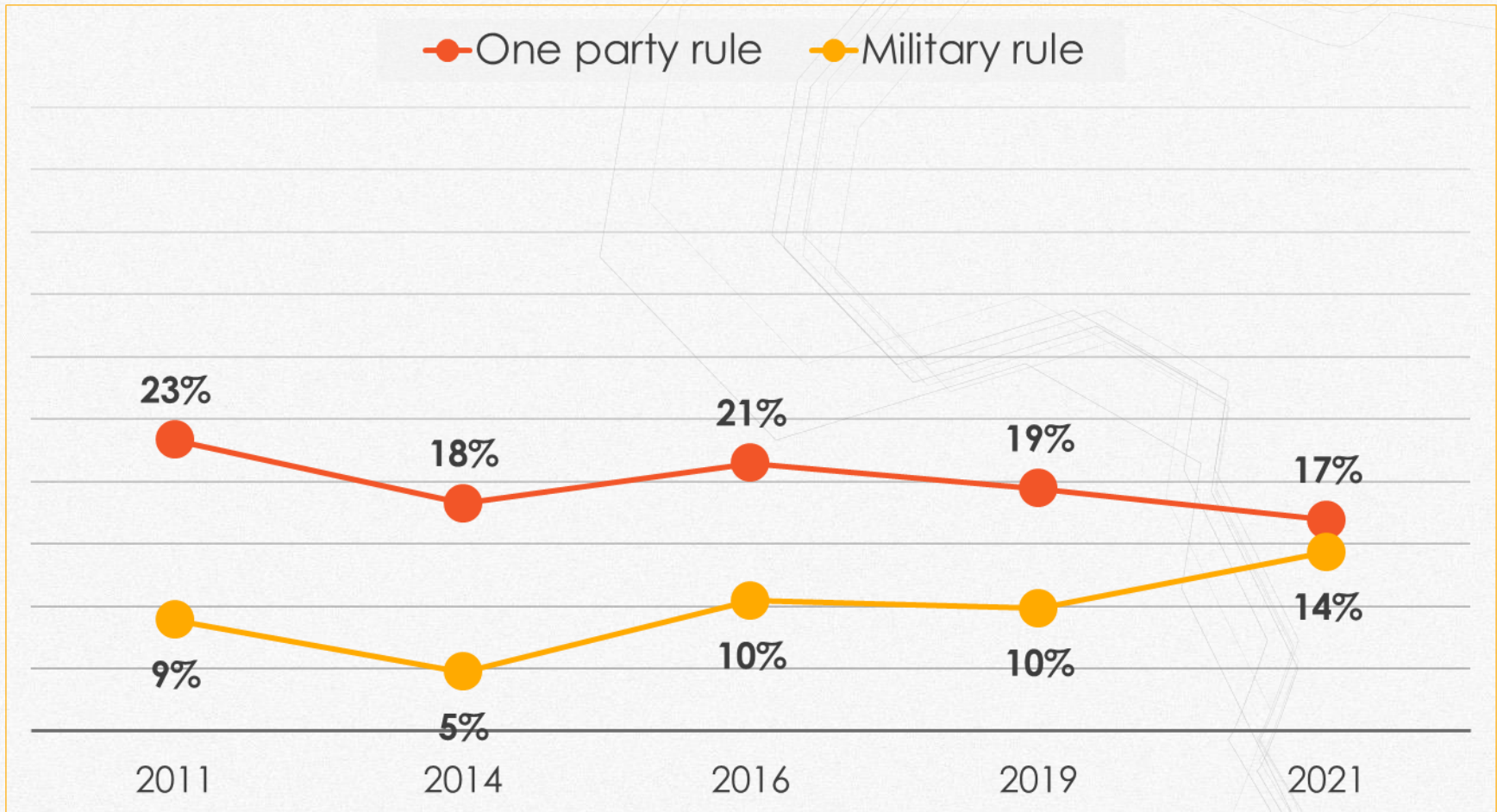
Statement 2: The president should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country rather than wasting time justifying his actions.



2

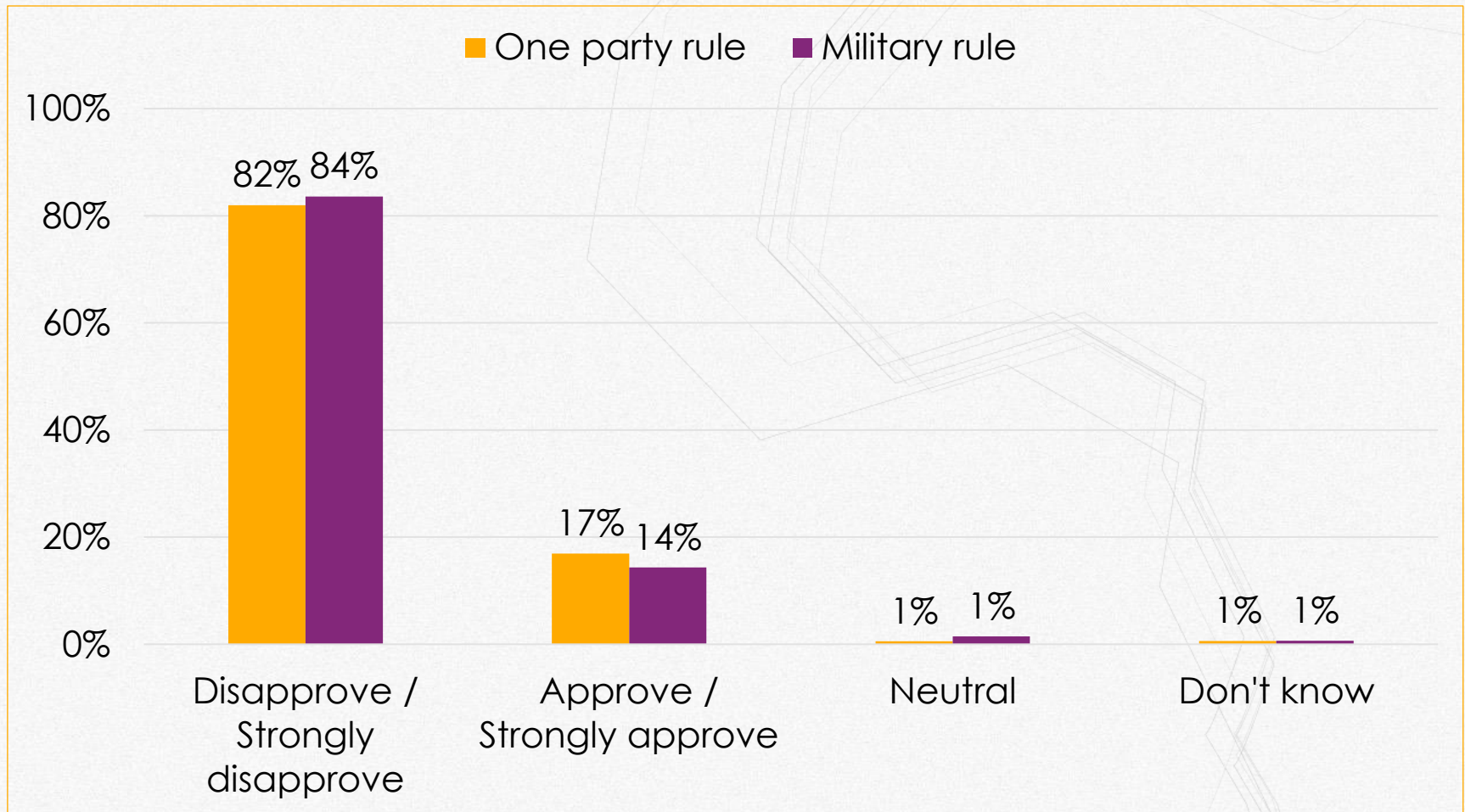
The Military's role in Kenyan democracy

One party rule; Military rule | 2011 - 2021



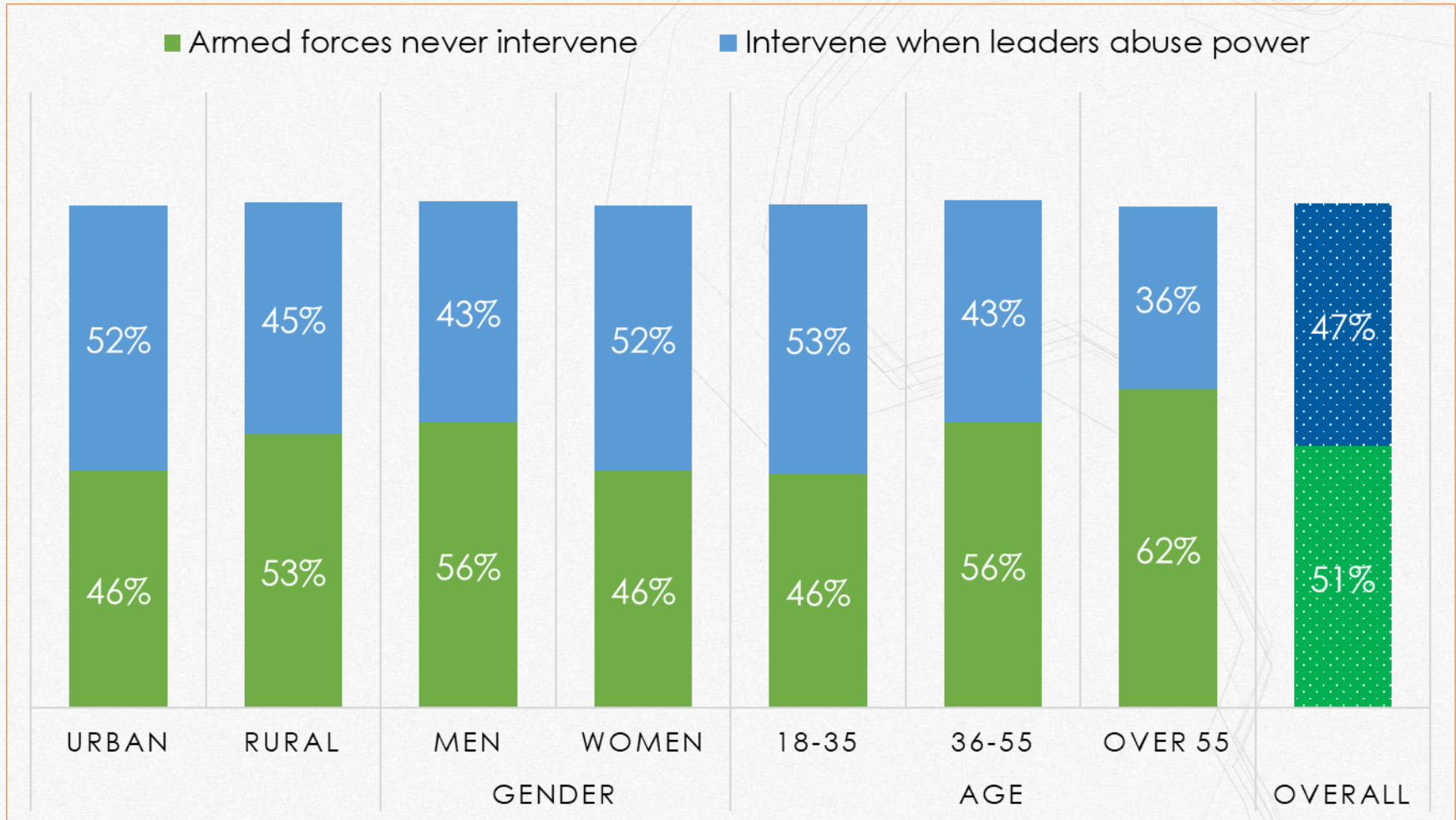
Respondents were asked: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of: One party rule; Military rule? (% who approve / strongly approve)

One party rule; Military rule | 2021



Respondents were asked: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of: One party rule; Military rule?

Armed forces never intervene vs Intervene when leaders abuse power | 2021



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Kenya's defence forces should never intervene in the country's political process.

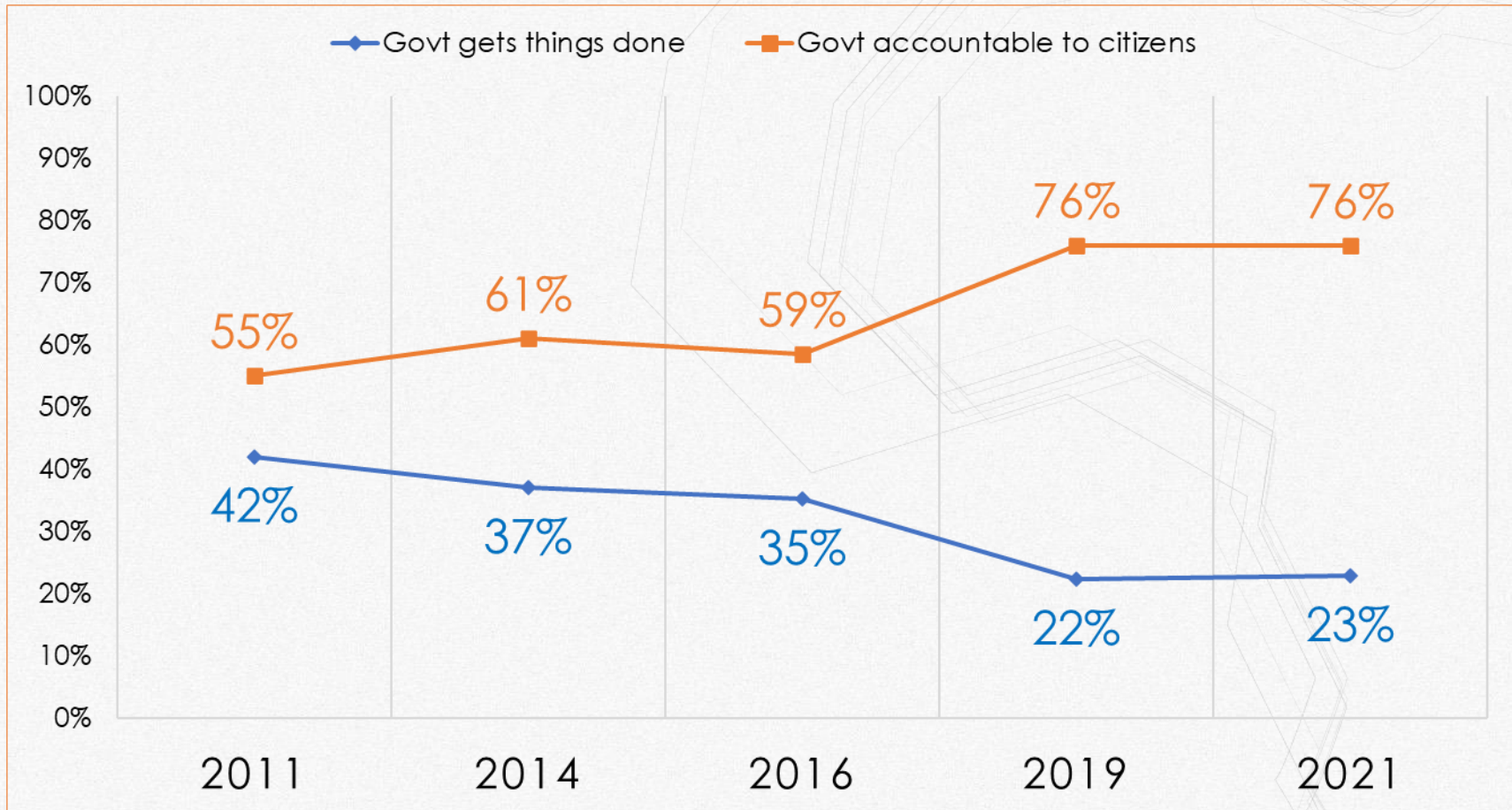
Statement 2: It is legitimate for the defence forces to take control of government when elected leaders abuse power for their own ends.



3

Functional Vs. Accountable Govt.

Govt Getting things done | 2011 - 2021

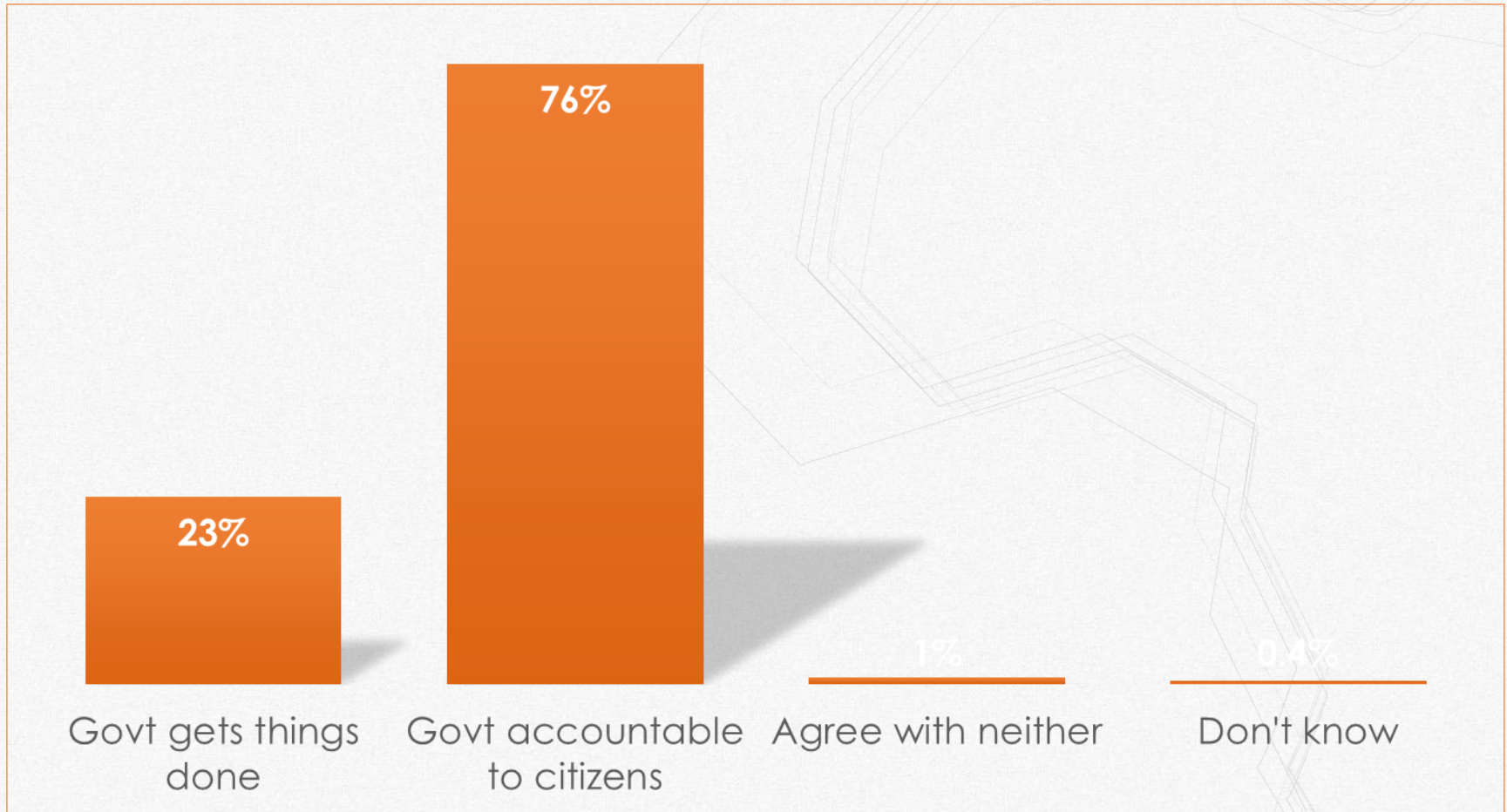


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.

Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.

Govt Getting Things Done | 2021



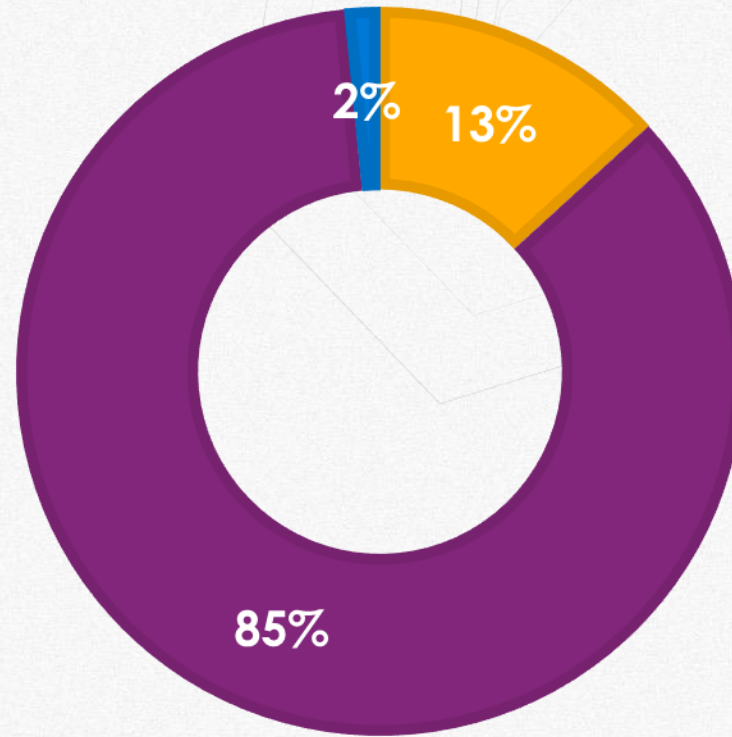
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Gov't is like a boss vs Gov't is like an employee | 2021

■ Government like a boss ■ Government is like an employee ■ Agree with neither

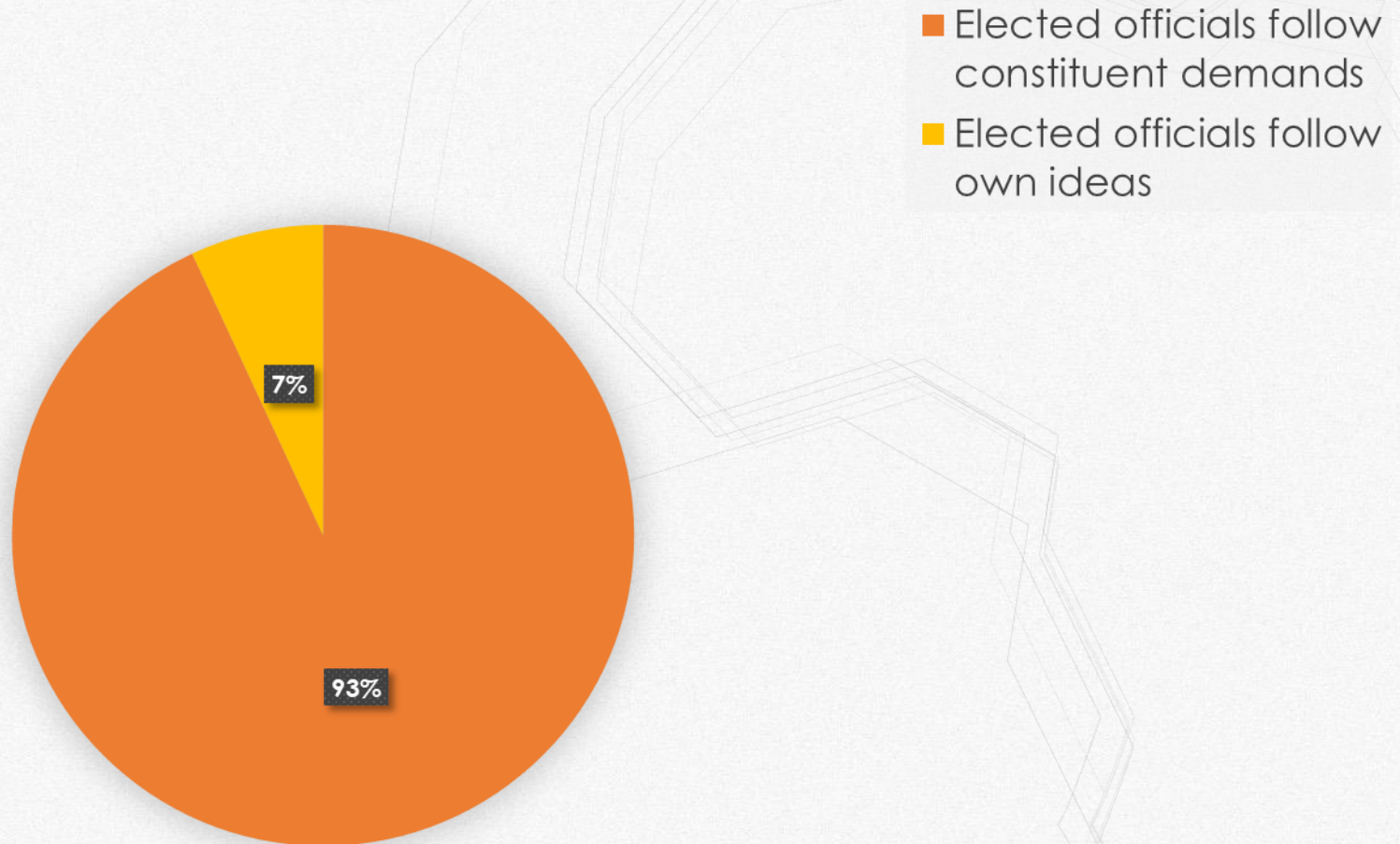


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: The government is like the people's boss. People should respect the government and do what it directs.

Statement 2: The government is like the people's employee. It should respect citizens and do what they request.

Elected officials follow constituent demands vs follow own ideas | 2021

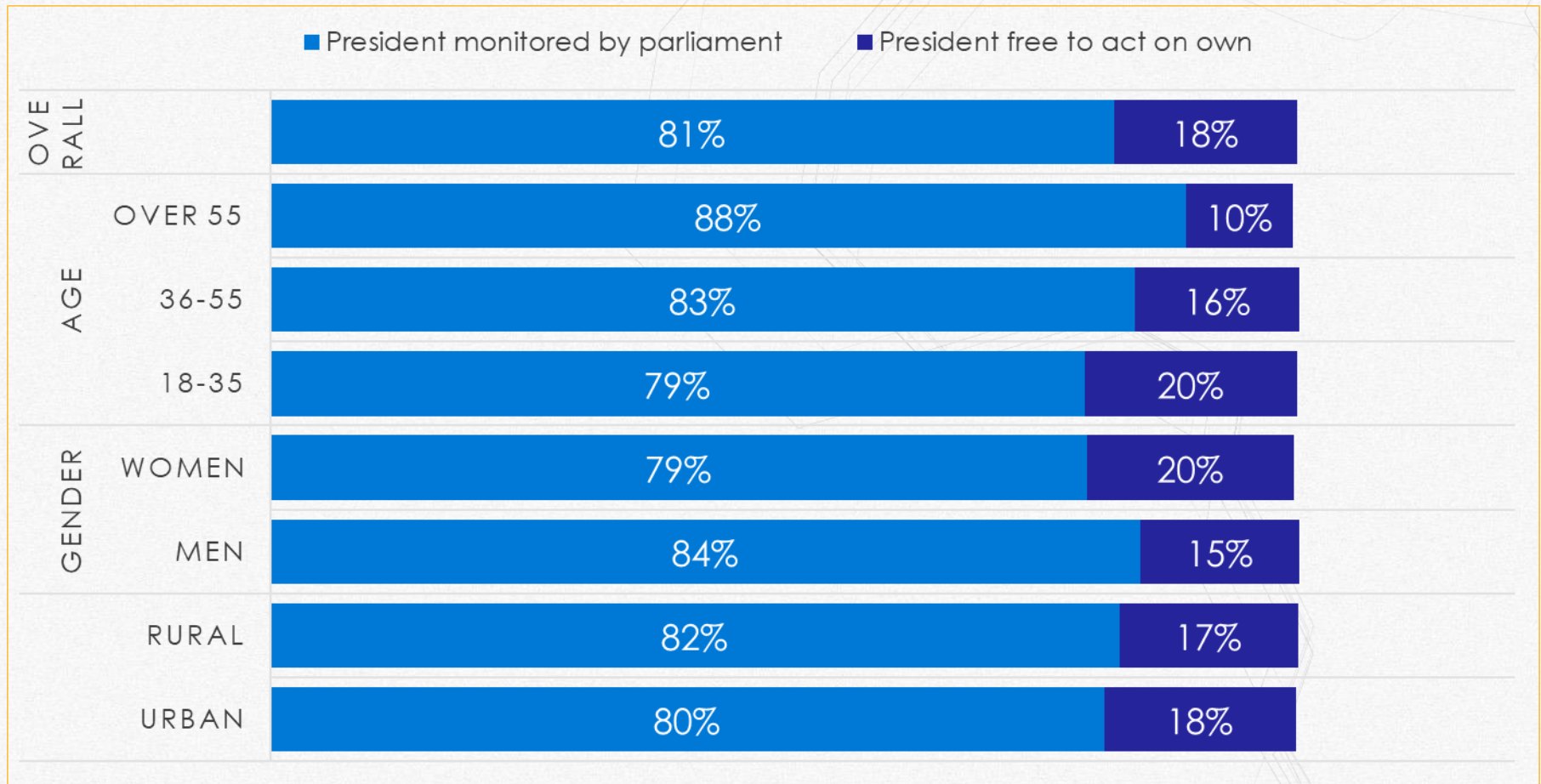


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Our elected officials should listen to constituents' views and do what they demand.

Statement 2: Our elected leaders should follow their own ideas in deciding what is best for the country.

President monitored by parliament vs President free to act on own | 2021

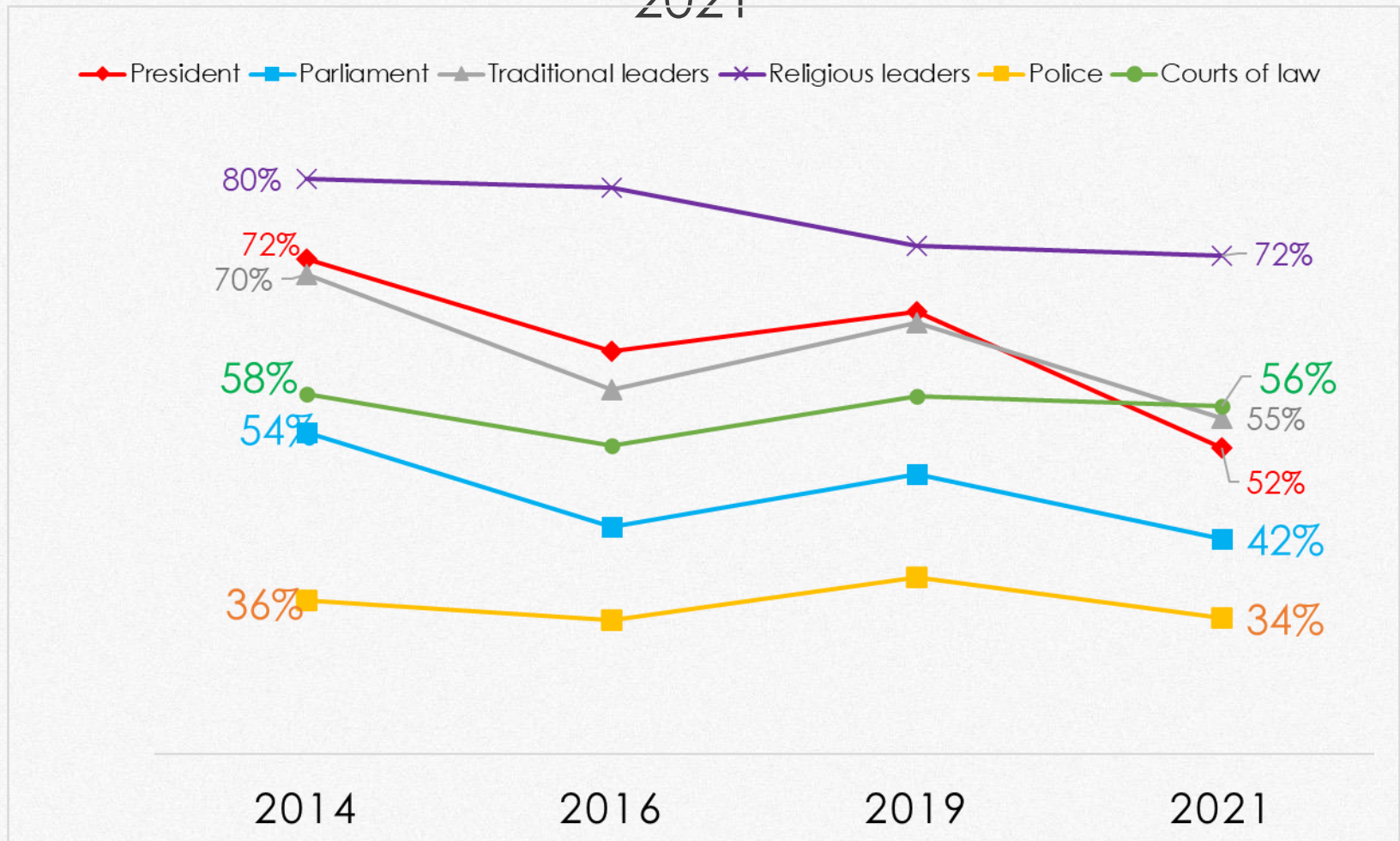


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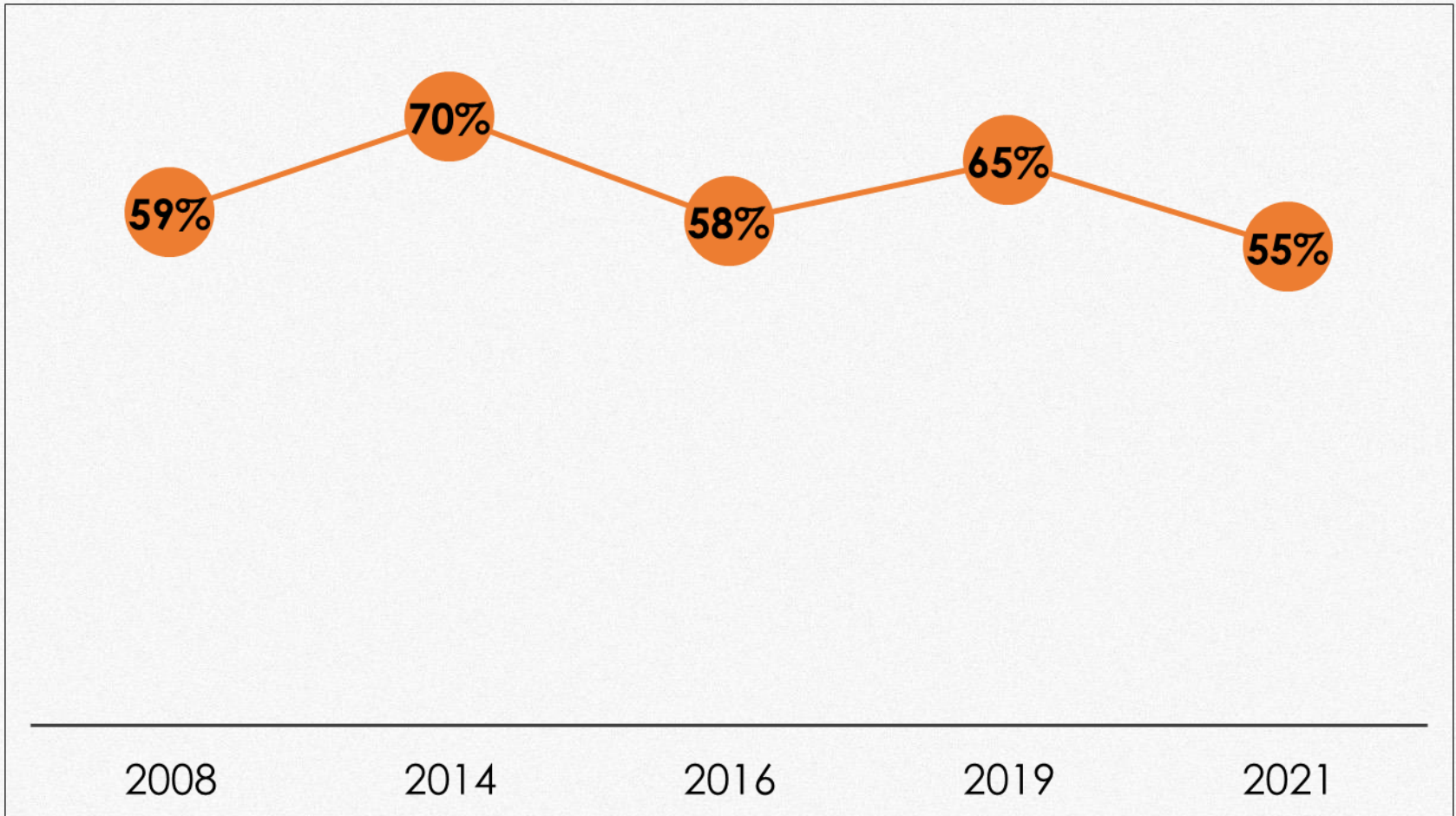
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Trust in Formal vs Informal Institutions Kenya | 2014-2021



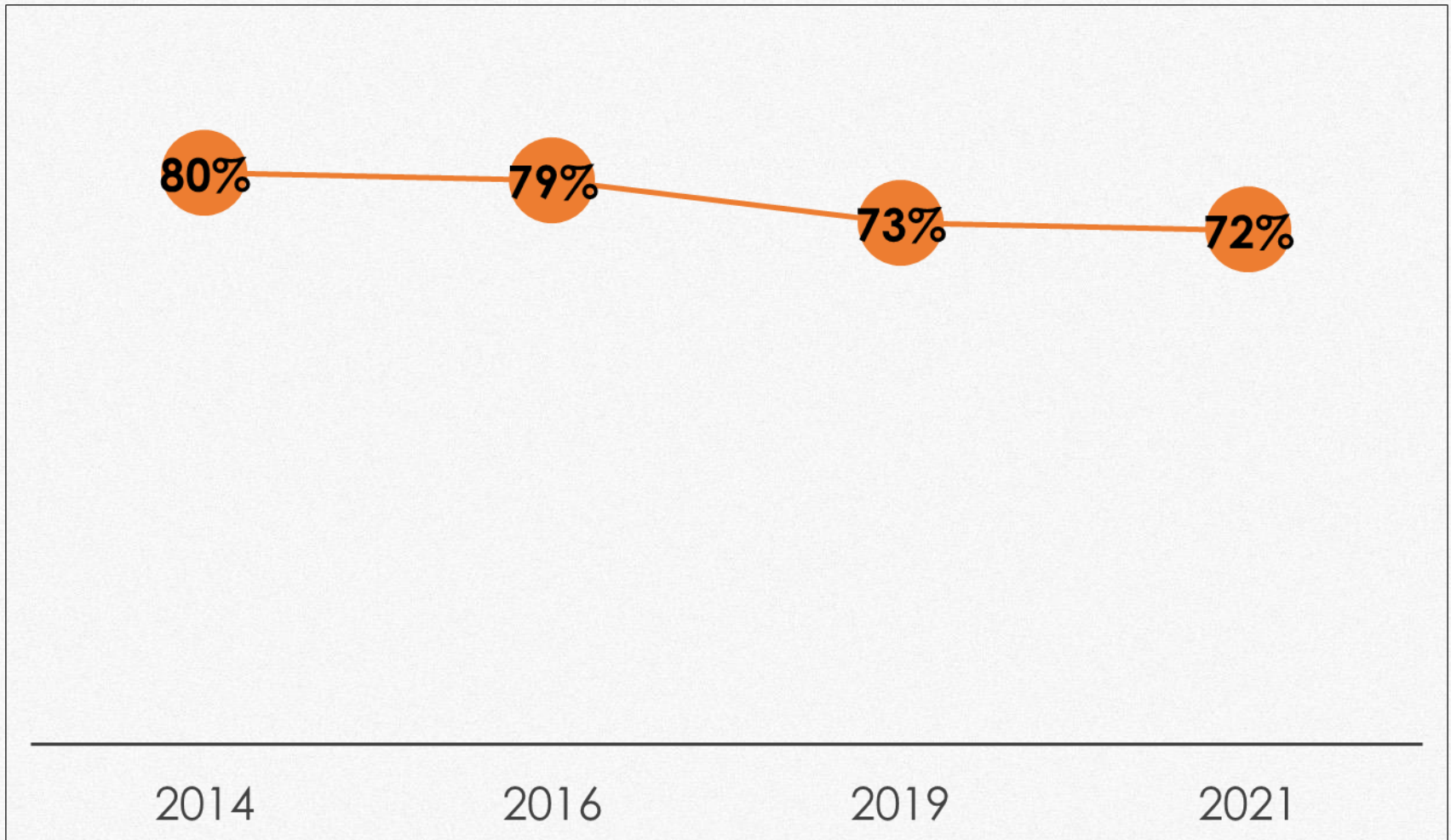
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

Trust in traditional leaders | Kenya | 2008-2021



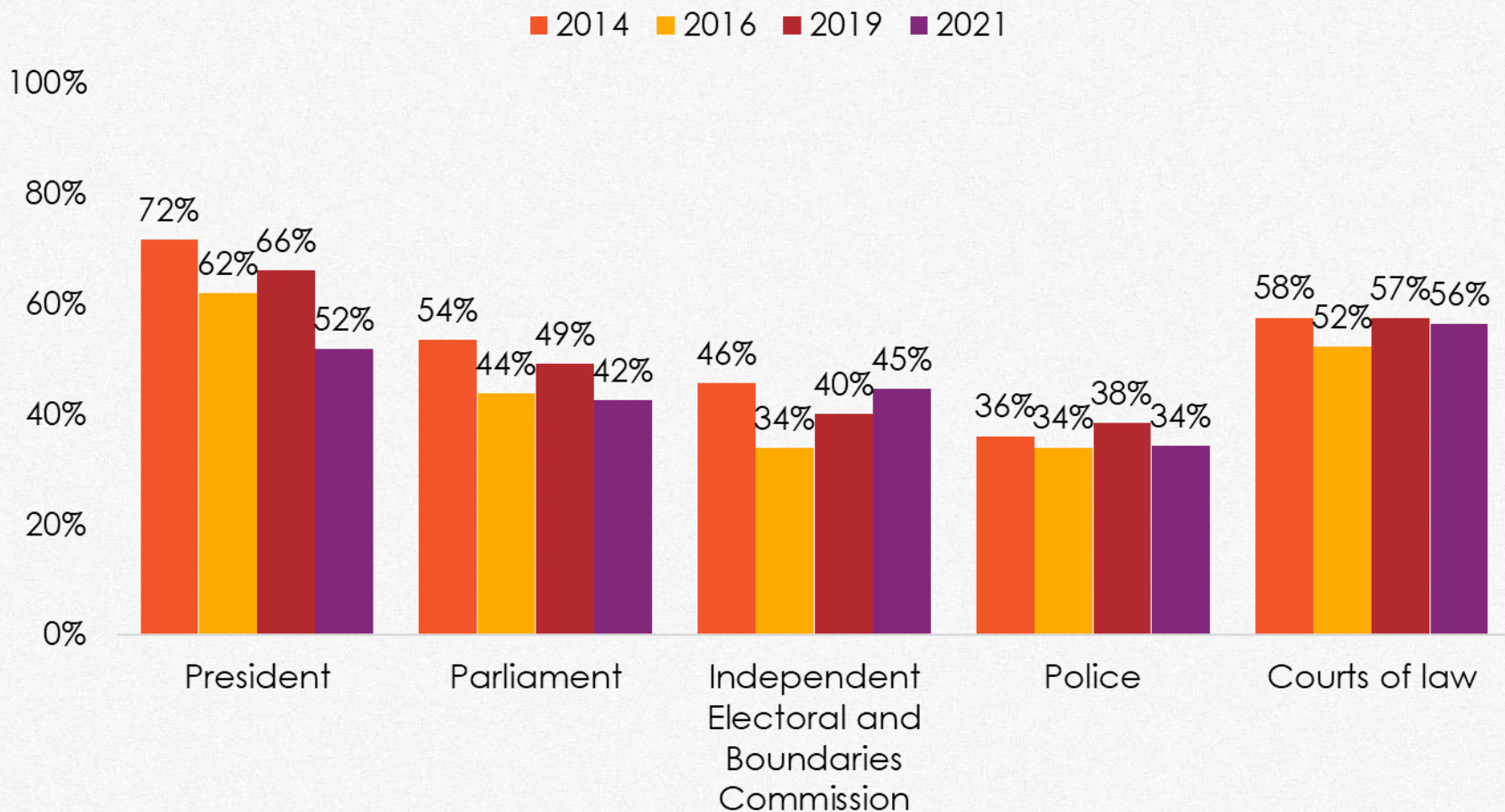
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Trust in religious leaders | Kenya | 2014-2021



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust religious leaders, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

Trust in governance institutions | Kenya | 2014-2021

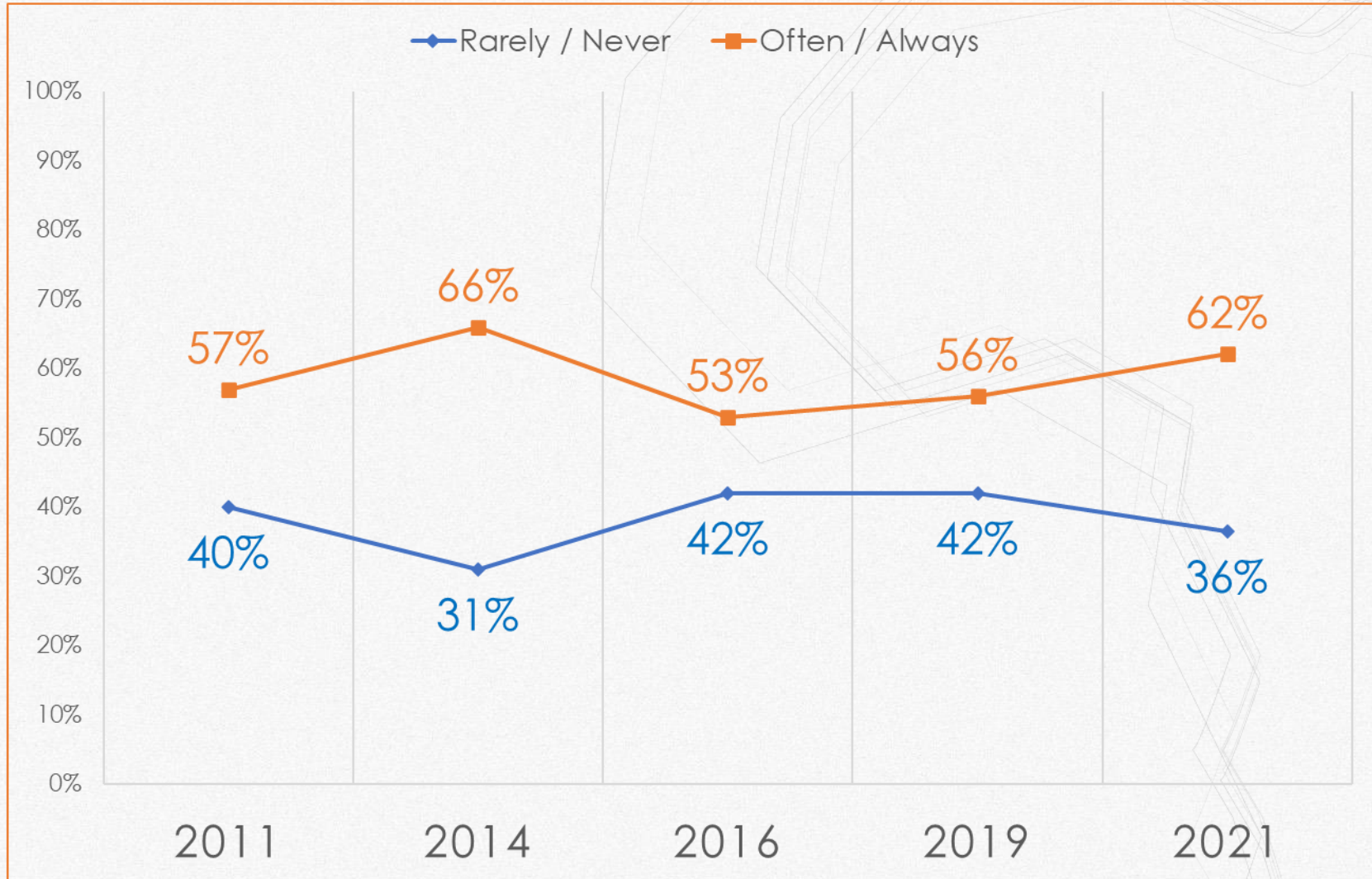


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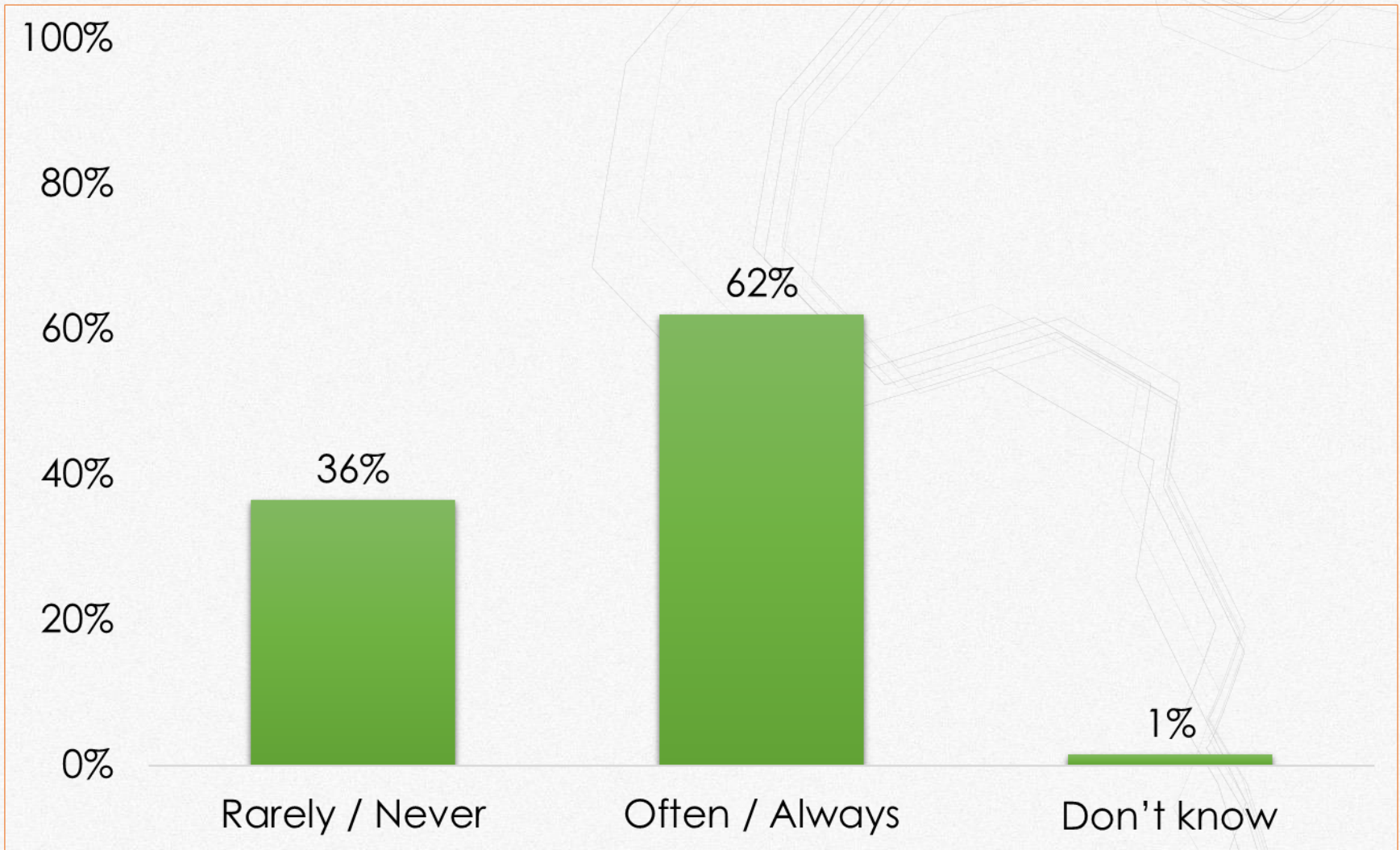
Is the rule of law under threat?

How often people treated unequally under the law | 2011 - 2021



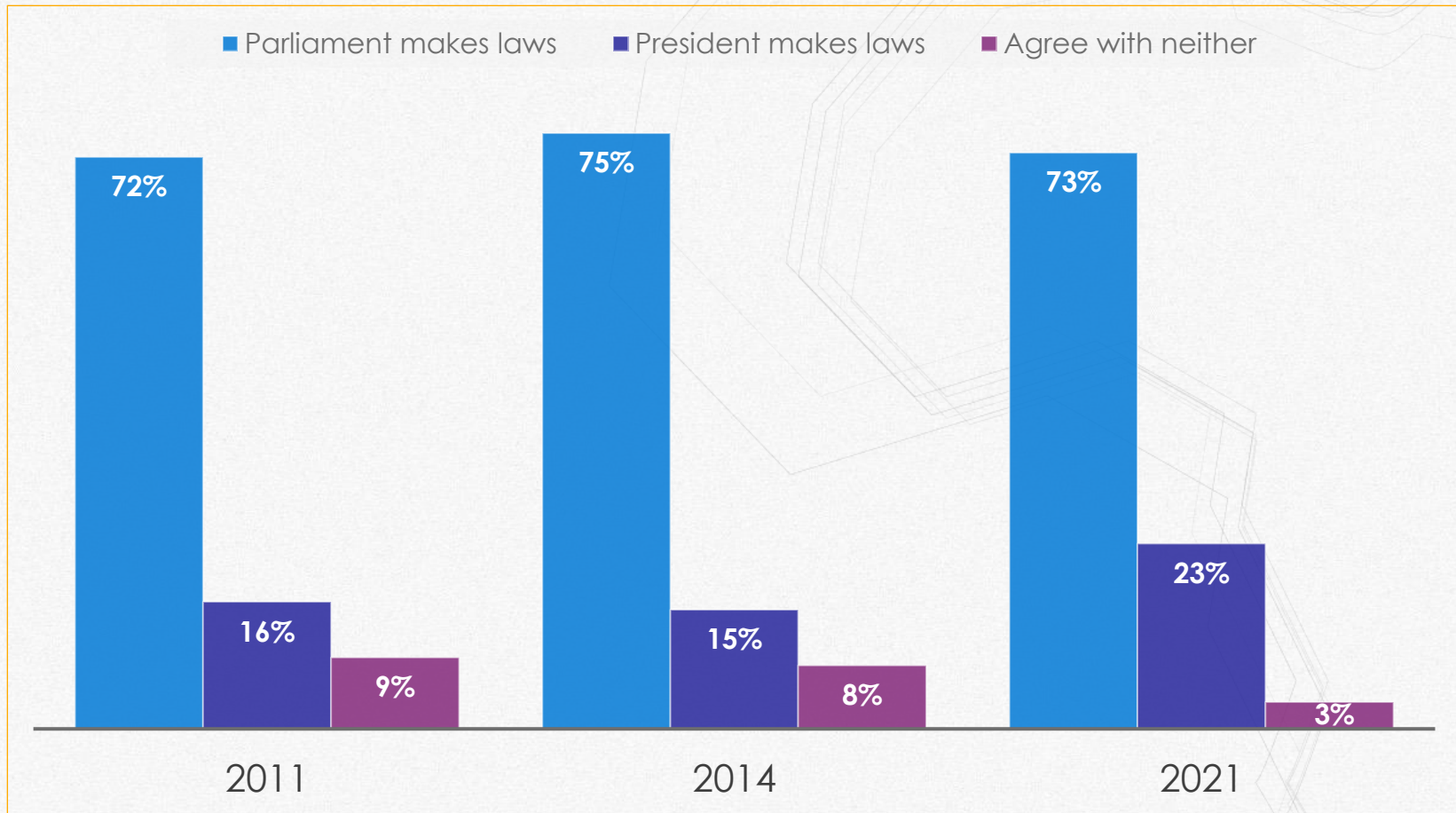
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How often people treated unequally under the law | 2021



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Parliament makes laws vs president does | 2011 - 2021

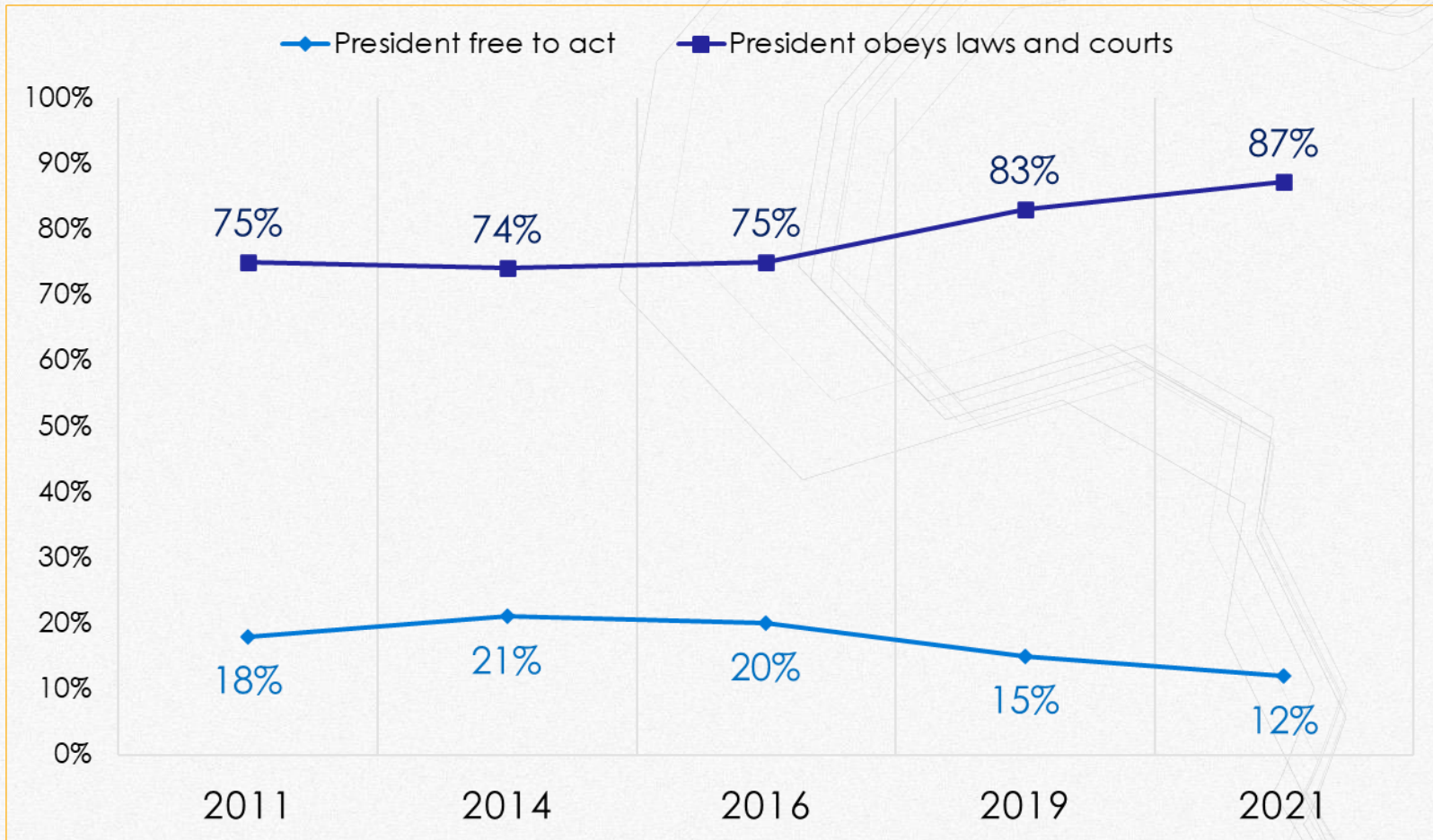


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Members of Parliament represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the president does not agree.

Statement 2: Since the president represents all of us, he should pass laws without worrying about what Parliament thinks.

President free to act vs President obeys the laws and courts | 2011 - 2021

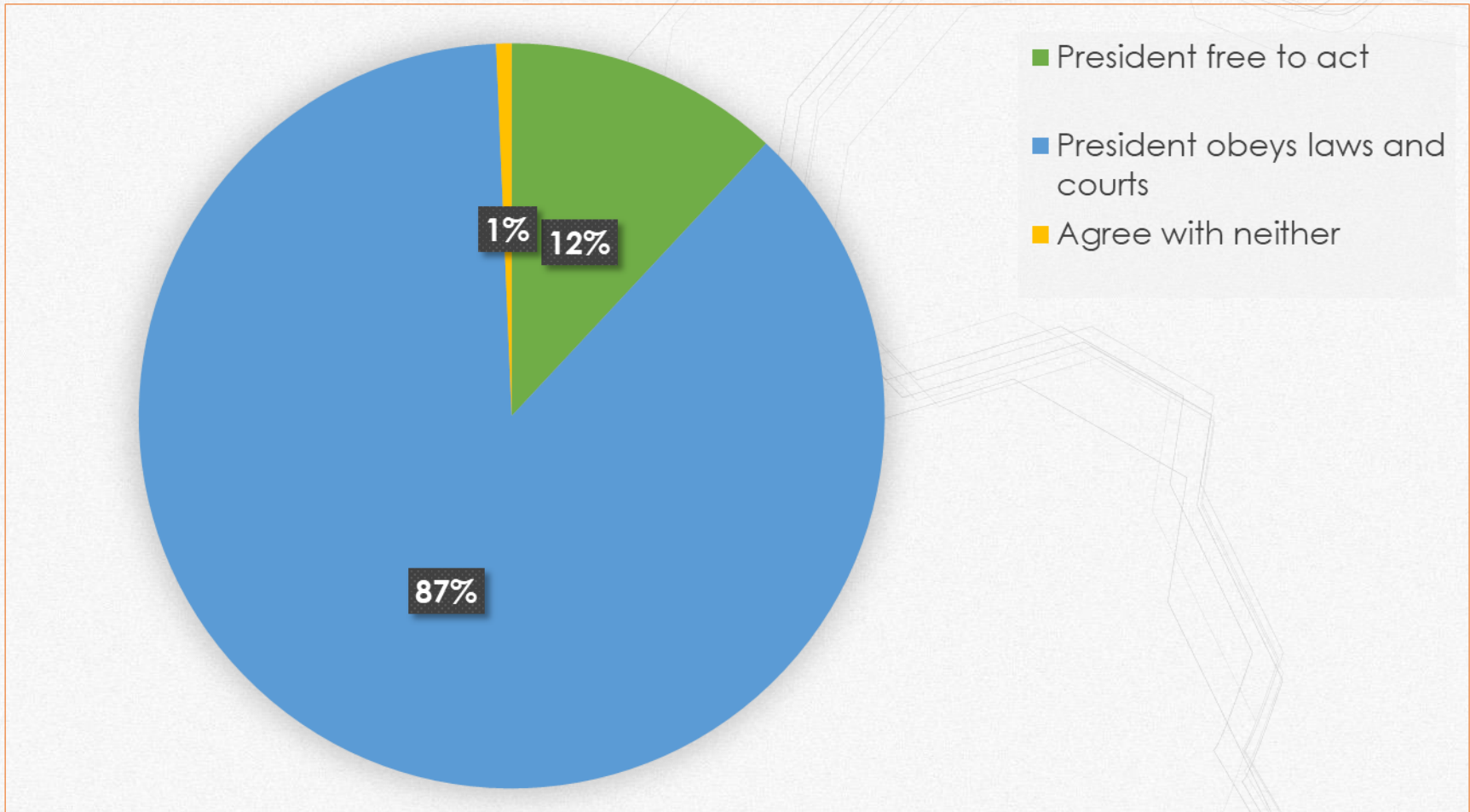


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Since the president was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong.

Statement 2: The president must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong

President free to act vs President obeys the laws and courts | 2021



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CONCLUSIONS: So, is Kenyan democracy working?



- Kenyan democracy has made critical gains or 'small democratic wins' over the years due to the resilience of Kenyan society in supporting democracy (**the degree of democratic support is high**)
- *There is sufficient societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy. But challenges remain [primarily those unique to the country's level of development]*
- On **perceptions of military rule**, the proportion of the Kenyan population that would prefer military rule **is moderate**.
- **Perception of democracy and the economic system**; a high proportion of Kenyan people believe that democracy benefits economic performance.

Conclusions

- Perceptions of leadership favours democracy; the proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elections is low—**how parliament works in practice has had serious challenges, but it has not failed**
- Public confidence in government is **moderate but relatively lower than in other informal public authorities like traditional institutions (WHY?)**.
- The degree to which citizens are treated equally under the law is very **LOW (currently below 40%)**.

Thank you

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